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JACQUES CARTIER. — *Frontispiece*

# French Pathfinders
in
# North America

By
William Henry Johnson
Author of "The World's Discoverers," "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," etc.

*With Seven Full-Page Plates*

Boston
Little, Brown, and Company
1912

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# *FOREWORD*

THE compiler of the following sketches does not make any claim to originality. He has dealt with material that has been used often and again. Still there has seemed to him to be a place for a book which should outline the story of the great French explorers in such simple, direct fashion as might attract young readers. Trying to meet this need, he has sought to add to the usefulness of the volume by introductory chapters, simple in language, but drawn from the best authorities and carefully considered, giving a view of Indian society; also, by inserting numerous notes on Indian tribal connections, customs, and the like subjects.

By selecting a portion of Radisson's journal for publication he does not by any means range himself on the side of the scholarly and gifted writer who has come forward as the champion of that picturesque scoundrel, and seriously proposes

him as the real hero of the Northwest, to whom, we are told, is due the honor which we have mistakenly lavished on such commonplace persons as Champlain, Joliet, Marquette, and La Salle.

While the present writer is not qualified to express a critical opinion as to the merits of the controversy about Radisson, a careful reading of his journal has given him an impression that the greatest part is so vague, so wanting in verifiable details, as to be worthless for historical purposes. One portion, however, seems unquestionably valuable, besides being exceedingly interesting. It is that which recounts his experiences on Lake Superior. It bears the plainest marks of truth and authenticity, and it is accepted as historical by the eminent critic, Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites. Therefore it is reproduced here, in abridged form; and on the strength of it Radisson is assigned a place among the Pathfinders.

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# Chapter I

## THE ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE INDIAN RACE

# *French Pathfinders in North America*

## Chapter I

### THE ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE INDIAN RACE

**America probably peopled from Asia. — Unity of the American Race. — The Eskimo, possibly, an Exception. — Range of the Several Groups.**

IN an earlier volume, "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," the probable origin of the native races of America has been discussed. Let us restate briefly the general conclusions there set forth.

It is the universal opinion of scientific men that the people whom we call Indians did not originate in the Western World, but, in the far distant past, came upon this continent from another — from Europe, some say; from Asia, say others. In support of the latter opinion it is pointed out that Asia and America once were connected by a broad belt of land, now sunk

beneath the shallow Bering Sea. It is easy, then, to picture successive hordes of dusky wanderers pouring over from the old, old East upon the virgin soil of what was then emphatically a new world, since no human beings roamed its vast plains or traversed its stately forests.

Human wave followed upon wave, the new comers pushing the older ones on. Some wandered eastward and spread themselves in the region surrounding Hudson Bay. Others took a southeast course and were the ancestors of the Algonquins, Iroquois, and other families inhabiting the eastern territory of the United States. Still others pushed their way down the Pacific coast and peopled Mexico and Central America, while yet others, driven no doubt by the crowding of great numbers into the most desirable regions of the isthmus, passed on into South America and gradually overspread it.

Most likely these hordes of Asiatic savages wandered into America during hundreds of years; and no doubt there was great diversity among them, some being far more advanced in the arts of life than others. But the essential thing to notice is that they were *all of one blood.* Thus their descendants, however different they may

have become in language and customs, constitute one stock, which we call the *American Race.* The peoples who reared the great earth-mounds of the Middle West, those who carved the curious sculptures of Central America, those who built the cave-dwellings of Arizona, those who piled stone upon stone in the quaint pueblos of New Mexico, those who drove Ponce de Leon away from the shores of Florida, and those who greeted the Pilgrims with, "Welcome, Englishmen!" — all these, beyond a doubt, were of one widely varying race.

To this oneness of all native Americans there is, perhaps, a single exception. Some writers look upon the Eskimo as a remnant of an ancient European race, known as the "Cave-men" because their remains are found in caves in Western Europe, always associated with the bones of arctic animals, such as the reindeer, the arctic fox, and the musk-sheep. From this fact it seems that these primitive men found their only congenial habitation amid ice and snow. Now, the Eskimo are distinctly an arctic race, and in other particulars they are amazingly like these men of the caves who dwelt in Western Europe when it had a climate like that of Greenland. The lamented

Dr. John Fiske puts the case thus strongly: "The stone arrow-heads, the sewing-needles, the necklaces and amulets of cut teeth, and the daggers made from antler, used by the Eskimos, resemble so minutely the implements of the Cave-men, that if recent Eskimo remains were to be put into the Pleistocene caves of France and England, they would be indistinguishable in appearance from the remains of the Cave-men which are now found there."

Further, these ancient men had an astonishing talent for delineating animals and hunting scenes. In the caves of France have been found carvings on bone and ivory, probably many tens of thousands of years old, which represent in the most life-like manner mammoths, cave-bears, and other animals now extinct. Strangely enough, of all existing savage peoples the Eskimo alone possess the same faculty. These circumstances make it probable that they are a remnant of the otherwise extinct Cave-men. If this is so, their ancestors probably passed over to this continent by a land-connection then existing between Northern Europe and Northern America, of which Greenland is a survival.

From the Eskimo southward to Cape Horn

we find various branches of the one American race. First comes the *Athapascan* stock, whose range extends from Hudson Bay westward through British America to the Rocky Mountains. One branch of this family left the dreary regions of almost perpetual ice and snow, wandered far down toward the south, and became known as the roaming and fierce Apaches, Navajos, and Lipans of the burning southwestern plains.

Immediately south of the Athapascans was the most extensive of all the families, the *Algonquin*. Their territory stretched without interruption westward from Cape Race, in Newfoundland, to the Rocky Mountains, on both banks of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. It extended southward along the Atlantic seaboard as far, perhaps, as the Savannah River. This family embraced some of the most famous tribes, such as the Abnakis, Micmacs, Passamaquoddies, Pequots, Narragansetts, and others in New England; the Mohegans, on the Hudson; the Lenape, on the Delaware; the Nanticokes, in Maryland; the Powhatans, in Virginia; the Miamis, Sacs and Foxes, Kickapoos and Chippeways, in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys; and the Shawnees, on the Tennessee.

This great family is the one that came most in contact and conflict with our forefathers. The Indians who figure most frequently on the bloody pages of our early story were Algonquins. This tribe has produced intrepid warriors and sagacious leaders.

Its various branches represent a very wide range of culture. Captain John Smith and Champlain, coasting the shores of New England, found them closely settled by native tribes living in fixed habitations and cultivating regular crops of corn, beans, and pumpkins. On the other hand, the Algonquins along the St. Lawrence, as well as some of the western tribes, were shiftless and roving, growing no crops and having no settled abodes, but depending on fish, game, and berries for subsistence, famished at one time, at another gorged. Probably the highest representatives of this extensive family were the Shawnees, at its southernmost limit.

Like an island in the midst of the vast Algonquin territory was the region occupied by the *Huron-Iroquois* family. In thrift, intelligence, skill in fortification, and daring in war, this stock stands preëminent among all native Americans. It included the Eries and Hurons, in Canada;

the Susquehannocks, on the Susquehanna; and the Conestogas, also in Pennsylvania. But by far the most important branch was the renowned confederacy called the Five Nations. This included the Senecas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Oneidas, and Mohawks. These five tribes occupied territory in a strip extending through the lake region of New York. At a later date a kindred people, the Tuscaroras, who had drifted down into Carolina, returned northward and rejoined the league, which thereafter was known as the Six Nations. This confederacy was by far the most formidable aggregation of Indians within the territory of the present United States. It waged merciless war upon other native peoples and had become so dreaded, says Dr. Fiske, that at the cry "A Mohawk!" the Indians of New England fled like sheep. It was especially hostile to some alien branches of its own kindred, the Hurons and Eries in particular.

South of the Algonquins was the *Maskoki* group of Indians, of a decidedly high class, comprising the Creeks, or Muskhogees, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, and, later, the Seminoles. They occupied the area of the Gulf States, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River. The

building of the Ohio earthworks is by many students attributed to the ancestors of these southern tribes, and it was they who heroically fought the Spanish invaders.

The powerful *Dakota* family, also called *Sioux*, ranged over territory extending from Lake Michigan to the Rocky Mountains and covering the most of the valley of the Missouri.

The *Pawnee* group occupied the Platte valley, in Nebraska, and the territory extending thence southward; and the *Shoshonee* group had for its best representatives the renowned Comanches, the matchless horsemen of the plains.

On the Pacific coast were several tribes, but none of any special importance. In the Columbia and Sacramento valleys were the lowest specimens of the Indian race, the only ones who may be legitimately classed as savages. All the others are more properly known as barbarians.

In New Mexico and Arizona is a group of remarkable interest, the *Pueblo Indians*, who inhabit large buildings (pueblos) of stone or sun-dried brick. In this particular they stand in a class distinct from all other native tribes in the United States. They comprise the Zuñis, Moquis, Acomans, and others, having different languages,

but standing on the same plane of culture. In many respects they have advanced far beyond any other stock. They have specially cultivated the arts of peace. Their great stone or adobe dwellings, in which hundreds of persons live, reared with almost incredible toil on the top of nearly inaccessible rocks or on the ledges of deep gorges, were constructed to serve at the same time as dwelling-places and as strongholds against the attacks of the roaming and murdering Apaches. These people till the thirsty soil of their arid region by irrigation with water conducted for miles. They have developed many industries to a remarkable degree, and their pottery shows both skill and taste.

These high-class barbarians are especially interesting because they have undergone little change since the Spaniards, under Coronado, first became acquainted with them, 364 years ago. They still live in the same way and observe the same strange ceremonies, of which the famous "Snake-dance" is the best known. They are, also, on a level of culture not much below that of the ancient Mexicans; so that from the study of them we may get a very good idea of the people whom Cortes found and conquered.

# Chapter II

## SOMETHING ABOUT INDIAN SOCIAL LIFE

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**Mistakes of the Earliest European Visitors as to Indian Society and Government. — How Indian Social Life originated. — The Family Tie the Central Principle. — Gradual Development of a Family into a Tribe. — The Totem.**

THE first white visitors to America found men exercising some kind of authority, and they called them kings, after the fashion of European government. The Spaniards even called the head-chief of the Mexicans the "Emperor Montezuma." There was not a king, still less an emperor, in the whole of North America. Had these first Europeans understood that they were face to face with men of the Stone Age, that is, with men who had not progressed further than our own forefathers had advanced thousands of years ago, in that dim past when they used weapons and implements of stone, and when they had not as yet anything like written language, they would have been saved many blunders. They would not have called native chiefs by such high-sounding titles as "King

Powhatan" and "King Philip." They would not have styled the simple Indian girl, Pocahontas, a princess; and King James, of England, would not have made the ludicrous mistake of being angry with Rolfe for marrying her, because he feared that when her father died, she would be entitled to "the throne," and Rolfe would claim to be King of Virginia!

The study of Indian life has this peculiar interest, that it gives us an insight into the thinking and acting of our own forefathers long before the dawn of history, when they worshiped gods very much like those of the Indians.

All the world over, the most widely separated peoples in similar stages of development exhibit remarkably similar ideas and customs, as if one had borrowed from the other. There is often a curious resemblance between the myths of some race in Central Africa and those of some heathen tribe in Northern Europe. The human mind, under like conditions, works in the same way and produces like results. Thus, in studying pictures of Indian life as it existed at the Discovery, we have before us a sort of object-lesson in the condition of our own remote ancestors.

Now, the first European visitors made serious

errors in describing Indian life. They applied European standards of judgment to things Indian. A tadpole does not look in the least like a frog. An uninformed person who should find one in a pool, and, a few weeks later, should find a frog there, would never imagine that the tadpole had changed into the frog. Now, Indian society was in what we may call the tadpole stage. It was quite unlike European society, and yet it contained exactly the same elements as those out of which European society gradually unfolded itself long ago.

Indian society grew up in the most natural way out of the crude beginnings of all society. Let us consider this point for a moment. Suppose human beings of the lowest grade to be living together in a herd, only a little better than beasts, what influence would first begin to elevate them? Undoubtedly, parental affection. Indeed, mother-love is the foundation-stone of all our civilization. On that steadfast rock the rude beginnings of all social life are built. Young animals attain their growth and the ability to provide for themselves very early. The parents' watchful care does not need to be long exercised. The offspring, so soon as it is weaned, is quickly for-

gotten. Not so the young human being. Its brain requires a long time for its slow maturing. Thus, for years, without its parents' care it would perish. The mother's love is strengthened by the constant attention which she must so long give to her child, and this is shared, in a degree, by the father. At the same time, their common interest in the same object draws them closer together. Before the first-born is able to find its own food and shelter other children come, and so the process is continually extended. Thus arises the *family*, the corner-stone of all life that is above that of brutes.

But the little household, living in a cave and fighting hand to hand with wild beasts and equally wild men, has a hard struggle to maintain itself. In time, however, through the marriage of the daughters — for in savage life the young men usually roam off and take wives elsewhere, while the young women stay at home — instead of the original single family, we have the grown daughters, with their husbands, living still with their parents and rearing children, thus forming a group of families, closely united by kinship. In the next generation, by the same process continued, we have a dozen, perhaps twenty, families,

all closely related, and living, it may be, under one shelter, the men hunting and providing food for the whole group, and the women working together and preparing the food in common.

Moreover, they all trace their relationship through their mothers, because the women are the home-staying element. In our group of families, for instance, all the women are descendants of the original single woman with whom we began; but the husbands have come from elsewhere. This is no doubt the reason why among savages it seems the universal practice to trace kinship through the mother. Again, in such a little community as we have supposed, the women, being all united by close ties of blood, are the ruling element. The men may beat their wives, but, after all, the women, if they join together against any one man, can put him out and remain in possession.

These points it is important to bear in mind, because they explain what would otherwise appear very singular features of Indian life. For instance, we understand now why a son does not inherit anything, not so much as a tobacco-pipe, at his father's death. He is counted as the mother's child. For the same reason, if the

mother has had more than one husband, and children by each marriage, these are all counted as full brothers and sisters, because they have the same mother.

Such a group of families as has been supposed is called a *clan*, or in Roman history a *gens*. It may be small, or it may be very numerous. The essential feature is that it is a body of people united by the tie of common blood. It may have existed for hundreds of years and have grown to thousands of persons. Some of the clans of the Scotch Highlands were quite large, and it would often have been a hopeless puzzle to trace a relationship running back through many generations. Still, every Cameron knew that he was related to all the other Camerons, every Campbell to all the other Campbells, and he recognized a clear duty of standing by every clansman as a brother in peace and in war. We see thus that the clan organization grows naturally out of the drawing together of men to strengthen themselves in the fierce struggle of savage life. The clan is simply an extension of the family. The family idea still runs through it, and kinship is the bond that holds together all the members.

Now, this was just the stage of social progress that the Indians had reached at the Discovery. Their society was organized on the basis of the clan, and it bore all the marks of its origin.

Indians, however, have not any family names. Something, therefore, was needed to supply the lack of a common designation, so that the members of a clan might know each other as such, however widely they might be scattered. This lack was supplied by the clan-symbol, called a *totem*. This was always an animal of some kind, and an image of it was often rudely painted over a lodge-entrance or tattooed on the clansman's body. All who belonged to the clan of the Wolf, or the Bear, or the Tortoise, or any other, were supposed to be descended from a common ancestress; and this kinship was the tie that held them together in a certain alliance, though living far apart. It mattered not that the original clan had been split up and its fragments scattered among several different tribes. The bond of clanship still held. If, for example, a Cayuga warrior of the Wolf clan met a Seneca warrior of the same clan, their totem was the same, and they at once acknowledged each other as brothers.

Perhaps we might illustrate this peculiar relation by our system of college fraternities. Suppose that a Phi-Beta-Kappa man of Cornell meets a Phi-Beta-Kappa man of Yale. Immediately they recognize a certain brotherhood. Only the tie of clanship is vastly stronger, because it rests not on an agreement, but on a real blood relationship.

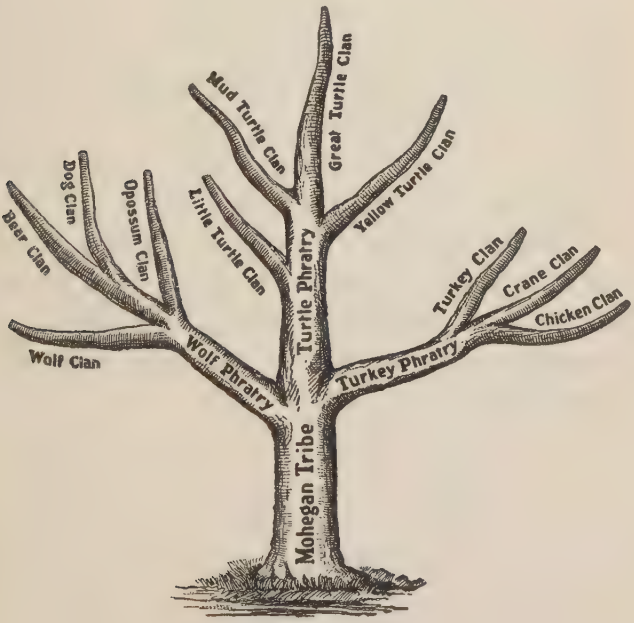
According to Indian ideas, a man and a woman of the same clan were too near kindred to marry. Therefore a man must always seek a wife in some other clan than his own; and thus each family contained members of two clans.

The clan was not confined to one neighborhood. As it grew, sections of it drifted away and took up their abode in different localities. Thus, when the original single Iroquois stock became split into five distinct tribes, each contained portions of eight clans in common. Sometimes it happened that, when a clan divided, a section chose to take a new totem. Thus arose a fresh centre of grouping. But the new clan was closely united to the old by the sense of kinship and by constant intermarriages. This process of splitting and forming new clans had gone on for a long time among the Indians — for how

many hundreds of years, we have no means of knowing. In this way there had arisen groups of clans, closely united by kinship. Such a group we call a *phratry*.

A number of these groups living in the same region and speaking a common dialect constituted a larger union which we sometimes call a *nation*, more commonly a *tribe*.

This relation may be illustrated by the familiar device of a family-tree, thus:



Here we see eleven clans, all descended from a common stock and speaking a common dialect, composing the Mohegan Tribe. Some of the smaller tribes, however, had not more than three clans.

The point that we need to get clear in our minds is that an Indian tribe was simply a huge family, extended until it embraced hundreds or even thousands of souls. In many cases organization never got beyond the tribe. Not a few tribes stood alone and isolated. But among some of the most advanced peoples, such as the Iroquois, the Creeks, and the Choctaws, related tribes drew together and formed a confederacy or league, for mutual help. The most famous league in Northern America was that of the Iroquois. We shall describe it in the next chapter. It deserves careful attention, both because of its deep historical interest, and because it furnishes the best-known example of Indian organization.

# Chapter III

## THE IROQUOIS LEAGUE

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## THE IROQUOIS LEAGUE

**History of the League. — Natural Growth of Indian Government. — How Authority was exercised, how divided. — Popular Assemblies. — Public Speaking. — Community Life.**

ORIGINALLY the Iroquois people was one, but as the parent stock grew large, it broke up into separate groups. Dissensions arose among these, and they made war upon one another. Then, according to their legend, Hayawentha, or Hiawatha, whispered into the ear of Daganoweda, an Onondaga sachem, that the cure for their ills lay in union. This wise counsel was followed. The five tribes known to Englishmen as the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas — their Indian names are different and much longer — buried the hatchet and formed a confederacy which grew to be, after the Aztec League in Mexico, the most powerful Indian organization in North America. It was then known as "The Five Nations."

About 1718, one of the original branches, the Tuscaroras, which had wandered away as far as North Carolina, pushed by white men hungry for their land, broke up their settlements, took up the line of march, returned northward, and rejoined the other branches of the parent stem. From this time forth the League is known in history as "The Six Nations," the constant foe of the French and ally of the English. The Indian name for it was "The Long House," so called because the wide strip of territory occupied by it was in the shape of one of those oblong structures in which the people dwelt.

When the five tribes laid aside their strife, the fragments of the common clans in each re-united in heartiest brotherhood and formed an eightfold bond of union. On the other hand, the Iroquois waged fierce and relentless war upon the Hurons and Eries, because, though they belonged to the same stock, they refused to join the League. This denial of the sacred tie of blood was regarded by the Iroquois as rank treason, and they punished it with relentless ferocity, harrying and hounding the offending tribes to destruction.

Indian government, like Indian society, was just such as had grown up naturally out of the

conditions. It was not at all like government among civilized peoples. In the first place, there were no written laws to be administered. The place of these was taken by public opinion and tradition, that is, by the ideas handed down from one generation to another and constantly discussed around the camp-fire and the council-fire. Every decent Indian was singularly obedient to this unwritten code. He wanted always to do what he was told his fathers had been accustomed to do, and what was expected of him. Thus there was a certain general standard of conduct.

Again, the men who ruled, though they were formally elected to office, had not any authority such as is possessed by our judges and magistrates, who can say to a man, "Do thus," and compel him to obey or take the consequences. The influence of Indian rulers was more like that of leading men in a civilized community: it was chiefly personal and persuasive, and it was exerted in various indirect ways. If, for example, it became a question how to deal with a man who had done something violently opposed to Indian usage or to the interest of the tribe, there was not anything like an open trial, but the chiefs held a secret council and discussed the case. If they

decided favorably to the man, that was an end of the matter. On the other hand, if they agreed that he ought to die, there was not any formal sentence and public execution. The chiefs simply charged some young warrior with the task of putting the offender out of the way. The chosen executioner watched his opportunity, fell upon his victim unawares, perhaps as he passed through the dark porch of a lodge, and brained him with his tomahawk. The victim's family or clan made no demand for reparation, as they would have done if he had been murdered in a private feud, because public opinion approved the deed, and the whole power of the tribe would have been exerted to sustain the judgment of the chiefs.

According to our ideas, which demand a fair and open trial for every accused person, this was most abhorrent despotism. Yet it had one very important safeguard: it was not like the arbitrary will of a single tyrant doing things on the impulse of the moment. Indians are eminently deliberative. They are much given to discussing things and endlessly powwowing about them. They take no important step without talking it over for days. Thus, in such a case as has been supposed, there was general concurrence in the

judgment of the chiefs, because they were understood to have canvassed the matter carefully, and their decision was practically that of the tribe.

This singular sort of authority was vested in two kinds of men; sachems, who were concerned with the administration of the tribal affairs at all times, and war-chiefs, whose duty was limited to leadership in the field. The sachems, therefore, constituted the real, permanent government. Of these there were ten chosen in each of the five tribes. Their council was the governing body of the tribe. In these councils all were nominally equals. But, naturally, men of strong personality exercised peculiar power. The fifty sachems of the five tribes composed the Grand Council which was the governing body of the League. In its deliberations each tribe had equal representation through its ten sachems. But the Onondaga nation, being situated in the middle of the five, and the grand council-fire being held in its chief town, exercised a preponderating influence in these meetings.

Besides the Grand Council and the tribal council, there were councils of the minor chiefs, and councils of the younger warriors, and even councils of the women, for a large part of an Indian's

time was taken up with powwowing. Besides these formal deliberative bodies, there were gatherings that were a sort of rude mass-meeting. If a question of deep interest was before the League for discussion, warriors flocked by hundreds from all sides to the great council-fire in the Onondaga nation. The town swarmed with visitors. Every lodge was crowded to its utmost capacity; temporary habitations rose, and fresh camp-fires blazed on every side, and even the unbounded Indian hospitality was strained to provide for the throng of guests. Thus, hour after hour, and day after day, the issue was debated in the presence of hundreds, some squatting, some lying at full length, all absolutely silent except when expressing approval by grunts.

The discussion was conducted in a manner that would seem to us exceedingly tedious. Each speaker, before advancing his views, carefully rehearsed all the points made by his predecessors. This method had the advantage of making even the dullest mind familiar with the various aspects of the subject, and it resulted in a so thorough sifting of it that when a conclusion was reached, it was felt to be the general sense of the meeting.

From this account it will be evident that public

speaking played a large part in Indian life. This fact will help us to account for the remarkable degree of eloquence sometimes displayed. If we should think of the Indian as an untutored savage, bursting at times into impassioned oratory, under the influence of powerful emotions, we should miss the truth very widely. The fact is, there was a class of professional speakers, who had trained themselves by carefully listening to the ablest debaters among their people, and had stored their memories with a large number of stock phrases and of images taken from nature. These metaphors, which give to Indian oratory its peculiar character, were not, therefore, spontaneous productions of the imagination, but formed a common stock used by all speakers as freely as orators in civilized society are wont to quote great authors and poets. Among a people who devoted so much time to public discussion, a forcible speaker wielded great influence. One of the sources of the power over the natives of La Salle, the great French explorer, lay in the fact that he had thoroughly mastered their method of oratory and could harangue an audience in their own tongue like one of their best speakers.

The subject of the chiefship is a very interest-

ing one. As has already been explained, a son did not inherit anything from his father. Therefore nobody was entitled to be a chief because his father had been one. Chiefs were elected wholly on the ground of personal qualities. Individual merit was the only thing that counted. Moreover, the chiefs were not the only men who could originate a movement. Any warrior might put on his war-paint and feathers and sing his war-song. As many as were willing might join him, and the party file away on the war-path without a single chief. If such a voluntary leader showed prowess and skill, he was sure to be some day elected a chief.

It is very interesting to reflect that just this free state of things existed thousands of years ago among our own ancestors in Europe. At that time there were no kings claiming a "divine right" to govern their fellow men. The chiefs were those whose courage, strength, and skill in war made them to be chosen "rulers of men," to use old Homer's phrase. If their sons did not possess these qualities, they remained among the common herd. But there came a time when, here and there, some mighty warrior gained so much wealth in cattle and in slaves taken in battle, that

he was able to bribe some of his people and to frighten others into consenting that his son should be chief after him. If the son was strong enough to hold the office through his own life and to hand it to his son, the idea soon became fixed that the chiefship belonged in that particular family.

This was the beginning of kingship. But our aborigines had not developed any such absurd notion as that there are particular families to which God has given the privilege of lording it over their fellow men. They were still in the free stage of choosing their chiefs from among the men who served them best. We may say with confidence that there was not an emperor, or a king, or anything more than an elective chief in the whole of North America.

Not only had nobody the title and office of a king among the Indians; nobody had anything like kingly authority. Rulership was not vested in any one man, but in the council of chiefs. This feature, of course, was very democratic. And there was another that went much further in the same direction: almost all property was held in common. For instance, the land of a tribe was not divided among individual owners, but be-

longed to the whole tribe, and no part of it could be bartered away without the entire tribe's consent. A piece might be temporarily assigned to a family to cultivate, but the ownership of it remained in the whole tribe. This circumstance tended more than anything else to prevent the possibility of any man's raising himself to kingly power. Such usurpations commonly rest upon large accumulations of private property of some kind. But among a people not one of whom owned a single rood of land, who had no flocks and herds, nor any domestic animals whatever, except dogs, and among whom the son inherited nothing from his father, there was no chance for anybody to gain wealth that would raise him above his fellows.

Thus we see that an Indian tribe was in many respects an ideal republic. With its free discussion of all matters of general interest; with authority vested in a body of the fittest men; with the only valuable possession, land, held by the whole tribe as one great family; in the entire absence of personal wealth; and with the unlimited opportunity for any man possessing the qualities that Indians admire to raise himself to influence, there really was a condition of affairs very like

that which philosophers have imagined as the best conceivable state of human society for preserving individual freedom.

Even the very houses of the Indians were adapted to community-life. They were built, not to shelter families, but considerable groups of families. One very advanced tribe, the Mandans, on the upper Missouri, built circular houses. But the most usual form, as among the Iroquois, was a structure very long in proportion to its width. It was made of stout posts set upright in the earth, supporting a roof-frame of light poles slanting upward and fastened together at their crossing. Both walls and roof were covered with wide strips of bark held in place by slender poles secured by withes. Heavy stones also were laid on the roof to keep the bark in place. At the top of the roof a space of about a foot was left open for the entrance of light and the escape of smoke, there being neither windows nor chimneys. At either end was a door, covered commonly with a skin fastened at the top and loose at the bottom. In the winter-season these entrances were screened by a porch.

In one of these long houses a number of families lived together in a way that carried out in

all particulars the idea of one great household. Throughout the length of the building, on both sides, were partitions dividing off spaces a few feet square, all open toward the middle like wide stalls in a stable. Each of these spaces was occupied by one family and contained bunks in which they slept. In the aisles, between every four of these spaces, was a fire which served the four families. The number of fires in a lodge indicated, quite nearly, the number of persons dwelling in it. To say, for instance, a lodge of five fires, meant one that housed twenty families.

This great household lived together according to the community-idea. The belongings of individuals, even of individual families, were very few. The produce of their fields of corn, beans, pumpkins, and sunflowers was held as common property ; and the one regular meal of the day was a common meal, cooked by the squaws and served to each person from the kettle. The food remaining over was set aside, and each person might help himself to it as he had need. If a stranger came in, the squaws gave him to eat out of the common stock. In fact, Indian hospitality grew out of this way of living in common. A single family would frequently have been "eaten out of

house and home," if it had needed to provide out of its own resources for all the guests that might suddenly come upon it.

We are apt to think of the Indian as a silent, reserved, solitary being. Nothing could be further from the truth. However they may appear in the presence of white men, among themselves Indians are a very jolly set. Their life in such a common dwelling as has been described was intensely social in its character. Of course, privacy was out of the question. Very little took place that was not known to all the inmates. And we can well imagine that when all were at home, an Indian lodge was anything else than a house of silence. Of a winter evening, for instance, with the fires blazing brightly, there was a vast deal of boisterous hilarity, in which the deep guttural tones of the men and the shrill voices of the squaws were intermingled. Around the fires there were endless gossiping, story-telling, and jesting. Jokes, by no means delicate and decidedly personal, provoked uproarious laughter, in which the victim commonly joined.

A village, composed of a cluster of such abodes standing without any order and enclosed by a stockade, was, at times, the scene of almost end-

less merry-making. Now it was a big feast; now a game of chance played by two large parties matched against each other, while the lodge was crowded almost to suffocation by eager spectators; now a dance, of the peculiar Indian kind; now some solemn ceremony to propitiate the spirits who were supposed to rule the weather, the crops, the hunting, and all the interests of barbarian life.

At all times there was endless visiting from lodge to lodge. Hospitality was universal. Let a visitor come in, and it would have been the height of rudeness not to set food before him. To refuse it would have been equally an offence against good manners. Only an Indian stomach was equal to the constant round of eating. White men often found themselves seriously embarrassed between their desire not to offend their hosts and their own repugnance to viands which could not tempt a civilized man who was not famished.

It seems strange to think of the women as both the drudges and the rulers of the lodge. Yet such they were. This fact arose from the circumstance already mentioned, that descent was counted, not through the fathers, but through the mothers. The home and the children were

the wife's, not the husband's. There she lived, surrounded by her female relatives, whereas he had come from another clan. If he proved lazy or incompetent to do his full share of providing, let the women unite against him, and out he must go, while the wife remained.

The community idea, which we have seen to be the key to Indian social life, showed itself in universal helpfulness. Ferocious and pitiless as these people were toward their enemies, the women even more ingeniously cruel than the men, nothing could exceed the cheerful spirit with which, in their own rough way, they bore one another's burdens. It filled the French missionaries with admiration, and they frequently tell us how, if a lodge was accidentally burned, the whole village turned out to help rebuild it; or how, if children were left orphans, they were quickly adopted and provided for. It is equally a mistake to glorify the Indian as a hero and to deny him the rude virtues which he really possessed.

# Chapter IV

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF FRENCHMEN IN THE NORTH OF AMERICA

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**The Difference between Spanish and French Methods. — What caused the Difference. — How it resulted.**

A SINGULAR and picturesque story is that of New France. In romantic interest it has no rival in North America, save that of Mexico. Frenchmen opened up the great Northwest; and for a long time France was the dominant power in the North, as Spain was in the South. When the French tongue was heard in wigwams in far western forests; when French goods were exchanged for furs at the head of Lake Superior and around Hudson Bay; when French priests had a strong post as far to the West as Sault Ste. Marie, and carried their missionary journeyings still further, who could have foreseen the day when the flag of republican France would fly over only two rocky islets off the coast of Newfoundland, and to her great rival, Spain, of all

her vast possessions would remain not a single rood of land on the mainland of the world to which she had led the white race?

At the period with which we are occupied these two great Catholic powers seemed in a fair way to divide North America between them. Their methods were as different as the material objects which they sought. The Spaniard wanted *Gold*, and he roamed over vast regions in quest of it, conquering, enslaving, and exploiting the natives as the means of achieving his ends. The Frenchman craved *Furs*, and for these he trafficked with the Indians. The one depended on conquest, the other on trade.

Now trade cannot exist without good-will. You may rob people at the point of the sword, but to have them come to you freely and exchange with you, you must have gained their confidence. Further, there was a deep-lying cause for this difference of method. Wretched beings may be worked in gangs, under a slave-driver, in fields and mines. This was the Spanish way. But hunting animals for their skins and trapping them for their furs is solitary work, done by lone men in the wilderness, and, above all, by men who are free to come and go. You

cannot make a slave of the hunter who roams the forests, traps the brooks, and paddles the lakes and streams. His occupation keeps him a wild, free man. Whatever advantage is taken of him must be gained by winning his confidence.

Thus the object of the Frenchman's pursuit rendered necessary a constantly friendly attitude toward the Indians. If he displeased them, they would cease to bring their furs. If he did not give enough of his goods in exchange, they would take a longer journey and deal with the Dutch at Albany or with the English at their outlying settlements. In short, the Spaniard had no rival and was in a position allowing him to be as brutal as he pleased. The Frenchman was simply in the situation of a shopkeeper who has no control over his customers, and if he does not retain their good-will, must see them deal at the other place across the street.

There is no doubt that this difference of conditions made an enormous difference between the Spanish and the French attitude toward the Indians. The Spaniards were naturally inclined to be haughty and cruel toward inferior races, while the French generally showed themselves friendly and mingled freely with the natives in

new regions. But the circumstance to which attention has here been called tended to exaggerate the natural disposition of each. Absolute power made the Spaniard a cruel master: the lack of it drove the Frenchman to gain his ends by cunning and cajolery.

The consequence was, that while the Spaniard was dreaded and shunned, and whole populations were wiped out by his merciless rule, the Frenchman was loved by the Indians. They turned gladly to him from the cold Englishman, who held himself always in the attitude of a superior being; they made alliances with him and scalped his enemies, white or red, with devilish glee; they hung about every French post, warmed themselves by the Frenchman's fire, ate his food, and patted their stomachs with delight; and they swarmed by thousands to Quebec, bringing their peltries for trade, received gewgaws and tinsel decorations from the Governor, and swore eternal allegiance to his master, the Sun of the World, at Versailles.

In a former volume, "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," we have followed the steps of Spain's dauntless leaders in the Western World. We have seen Balboa, Ponce, Cortes, Soto,

Coronado, making their way by the bloody hand, slaying, plundering, and burning, and we have heard the shrieks of victims torn to pieces by savage dogs.

In the present volume quite other methods will engage our attention. We shall accompany the shrewd pioneers of France, as they make their joyous entry into Indian villages, eat boiled dog with pretended relish, sit around the council-fire, smoke the Indian's pipe, and end by dancing the war-dance as furiously as the red men.

# Chapter V

## JACQUES CARTIER, THE DISCOVERER OF CANADA

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Jacques Cartier enters the St. Lawrence. — He imagines that he has found a Sea-route to the Indies. — The Importance of such a Route. — His Exploration of the St. Lawrence. — A Bitter Winter. — Cartier's Treachery and its Punishment. — Roberval's Disastrous Expedition.

HOW early the first Frenchmen visited America it is hard to say. It has been claimed, on somewhat doubtful evidence, that the Basques, that ancient people inhabiting the Pyrenees and the shores of the Bay of Biscay, fished on the coast of Newfoundland before John Cabot saw it and received credit as the discoverer of this continent. So much, at any rate, is certain, that within a very few years after Cabot's voyage a considerable fleet of French, Spanish, and Portuguese vessels was engaged in the Newfoundland fishery. Later the English took part in it. The French soon gained the lead in this industry

and thus became the predominant power on the northern shores of America, just as the Spaniards were on the southern. The formal claim of France to the territory which she afterward called New France was based on the explorations of her adventurous voyagers.

Jacques Cartier was a daring mariner, belonging to that bold Breton race whose fishermen had for many years frequented the Newfoundland Banks for codfish. In 1534 he sailed to push his exploration farther than had as yet been attempted. His inspiration was the old dream of all the early navigators, the hope of finding a highway to China. Needless to say, he did not find it, but he found something well worth the finding — Canada.

Sailing through the Straits of Belle Isle, he saw an inland sea opening before him. Passing Anticosti Island, he landed on the shore of a fine bay. It was the month of July, and it chanced to be an oppressive day. "The country is hotter than the country of Spain," he wrote in his journal. Therefore he gave the bay its name, the Bay of Chaleur (heat). The beauty and fertility of the country, the abundance of berries, and "the many goodly meadows, full of

grass, and lakes wherein great pleanty of salmons be," made a great impression on him.

On the shore were more than three hundred men, women, and children. "These showed themselves very friendly," he says, "and in such wise were we assured one of another, that we very familiarly began to traffic for whatever they had, till they had nothing but their naked bodies, for they gave us all whatsoever they had." These Indians belonged undoubtedly to some branch of the Algonquin family occupying all this region.

Cartier did not scruple to take advantage of their simplicity. At Gaspé he set up a cross with the royal arms, the fleur-de-lys, carved on it, and a legend meaning, "Long live the King of France!" He meant this as a symbol of taking possession of the country for his master. Yet, when the Indian chief asked him what this meant, he answered that it was only a landmark for vessels that might come that way. Then he lured some of the natives on board and succeeded in securing two young men to be taken to France. This villainy accomplished, he sailed for home in great glee, not doubting that the wide estuary whose mouth he had entered was the opening of the long-sought passage to Cathay. In France

his report excited wild enthusiasm. The way to the Indies was open! France had found and France would control it!

Natural enough was this joyful feeling. The only water-route to the East then in use was that around the Cape of Good Hope, and it belonged, according to the absurd grant of Pope Alexander the Sixth, to Portugal alone. Spain had opened another around the Horn, but kept the fact carefully concealed. In short, the selfish policy of Spain and Portugal was to shut all other nations out of trading with the regions which they claimed as theirs; and these tyrants of the southern seas were not slow in enforcing their claims. Spain, too, had ample means at her disposal. She was the mightiest power in the world, and her dominion on the ocean there was none to dispute. At that time Drake and Hawkins and those other great English seamen who broke her sea-power had not appeared. This condition of affairs compelled the northern nations, the English, French, and Dutch, to seek a route through high latitudes to the fabled wealth of the Indies. It led to those innumerable attempts to find a northeast or a northwest passage of which we have read elsewhere. (See, in "The World's Discoverers," ac-

counts of Frobisher, Davis, Barentz, and Hudson, and of Nordenskjöld, their triumphant successor.)

Now, Francis the First, the French monarch, a jealous rival of the Spanish sovereign, was determined to get a share of the New World. He had already, in 1524, sent out Verrazano to seek a passage to the East (See a sketch of this very interesting voyage in "The World's Discoverers"), and now he was eager to back Cartier with men and money.

Accordingly, the next year we find the explorer back at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, this time with three vessels and with a number of gentlemen who had embarked in the enterprise, believing that they were on their way to reap a splendid harvest in the Indies, like that of the Spanish cavaliers who sailed with the conquerors of Mexico and Peru. Entering, on St. Lawrence's day, the Gulf which he had discovered in the previous year, he named it the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The river emptying into it he called Hochelaga, from the Indian name of the adjacent country. Then, guided by the two young natives whom he had kidnapped the year before, whose home, though they had been seized near its mouth, was high up the river, he sailed up the

wide stream, convinced that he was approaching China.

In due time Stadaconé was reached, near the site of Quebec, and Cartier visited the chief, Donnaconna, in his village. The two young Indians who acted as guides and interpreters had been filling the ears of their countrymen with marvelous tales of France. Especially, they had "made great brags," Cartier says, about his cannon; and Donnaconna begged him to fire some of them. Cartier, quite willing to give the savages a sense of his wonderful resources, ordered twelve guns fired in quick succession. At the roar of the canon, he says, "they were greatly astonished and amazed; for they thought that Heaven had fallen upon them, and put themselves to flight, howling and crying and shrieking as if hell had broken loose."

Leaving his two larger vessels safely anchored within the mouth of the St. Charles River, Cartier set out with the smallest and two open boats, to ascend the St. Lawrence. At Hochelaga he found a great throng of Indians on the shore, wild with delight, dancing and singing. They loaded the strangers with gifts of fish and maize. At night the dark woods, far and near, were

illumined with the blaze of great fires around which the savages capered with joy.

The next day Cartier and his party were conducted to the great Indian town. Passing through cornfields laden with ripening grain, they came to a high circular palisade consisting of three rows of tree-trunks, the outer and the inner inclining toward each other and supported by an upright row between them. Along the top were "places to run along and ladders to get up, all full of stones for the defence of it." In short, it was a very complete fortification, of the kind that the Hurons and the Iroquois always built.

Passing through a narrow portal, the Frenchmen saw for the first time a group of those large, oblong dwellings, each containing several families, with which later travelers became familiar in the Iroquois and the Huron countries. Arriving within the town, the visitors found themselves objects of curious interest to a great throng of women and children who crowded around the first Europeans they had ever beheld, with expressions of wonder and delight. These bearded men seemed to them to have come down from the skies, children of the Sun.

Next, a great meeting was held. Then came a touching scene. An aged chief who was paralyzed was brought and placed at Cartier's feet, and the latter understood that he was asked to heal him. He laid his hands on the palsied limbs. Then came a great procession of the sick, the lame, and the blind, "for it seemed unto them," says Cartier, "that God was descended and come down from Heaven to heal them." We cannot but recall how Cortes and his Spaniards were held by the superstitious Aztecs to have come from another world, and how Cabeza de Vaca was believed to exercise the power of God to heal the sick. (See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America.") Cartier solemnly read a passage of the Scriptures, made the sign of the cross over the poor suppliants, and offered prayer. The throng of savages, without comprehending a word, listened in awe-struck silence.

After distributing gifts, the Frenchmen, with a blast of trumpets, marched out and were led to the top of a neighboring mountain. Seeing the magnificent expanse of forest extending to the horizon, with the broad, blue river cleaving its way through, Cartier thought it a domain worthy of a prince and called the eminence *Mont Royal.*

Thus originated the name of the future city of Montreal, built almost a century later.

By the time that he had returned to Stadaconé the autumn was well advanced, and his comrades had made preparations against the coming of winter by building a fort of palisades on or near the site where Quebec now stands.

Soon snow and ice shut in the company of Europeans, the first to winter in the northern part of this continent. A fearful experience it was. When the cold was at its worst, and the vessels moored in the St. Charles River were locked fast in ice and buried in snow-drifts, that dreadful scourge of early explorers, the scurvy, attacked the Frenchmen. Soon twenty-five had died, and of the living but three or four were in health. For fear that the Indians, if they learned of their wretched plight, might seize the opportunity of destroying them outright, Cartier did not allow any of them to approach the fort. One day, however, chancing to meet one of them who had himself been ill with the scurvy, but now was quite well, he was told of a sovereign remedy, a decoction of the leaves of a certain tree, probably the spruce. The experiment was tried with success, and the sick Frenchmen recovered.

At last the dreary winter wore away, and Cartier prepared to return home. He had found neither gold nor a passage to India, but he would not go empty-handed. Donnaconna and nine of his warriors were lured into the fort as his guests, overwhelmed by sturdy sailors, and carried on board the vessels. Then, having raised over the the scene of this cruel treachery the symbol of the Prince of Peace, he set sail for France.

In 1541 Cartier made another, and last, voyage to Canada. On reaching Stadaconé he was besieged by savages eagerly inquiring for the chiefs whom he had carried away. He replied that Donnaconna was dead, but the others had married noble ladies and were living in great state in France. The Indians showed by their coldness that they knew this story to be false. Every one of the poor exiles had died.

On account of the distrust of the natives, Cartier did not stop at Stadaconé, but pursued his way up the river. While the bulk of his party made a clearing on the shore, built forts, and sowed turnip-seed, he went on and explored the rapids above Hochelaga, evidently still hoping to find a passage to India. Of course, he was disappointed. He returned to the place

where he had left his party and there spent a gloomy winter, destitute of supplies and shunned by the natives.

All that he had to show for his voyage was a quantity of some shining mineral and of quartz crystals, mistaken for gold and diamonds. The treachery of the second voyage made the third a failure.

Thus ended in disappointment and gloom the career of France's great pioneer, whose discoveries were the foundation of her claims in North America, and who first described the natives of that vast territory which she called New France.

Another intending settler of those days was the Sieur de Roberval. Undismayed by Cartier's ill-success, he sailed up the St. Lawrence and cast anchor before Cap Rouge, the place which Cartier had fortified and abandoned. Soon the party were housed in a great structure which contained accommodations for all under one roof, so that it was planned on the lines of a true colony, for it included women and children. But few have ever had a more miserable experience. By some strange lack of foresight, there was a very scant supply of food, and with the winter came famine. Disease inevitably followed, so that before spring

one-third of the colony had died. We may think that Nature was hard, but she was mild and gentle, in comparison with Roberval. He kept one man in irons for a trifling offence. Another he shot for a petty theft. To quarreling men and women he gave a taste of the whipping-post. It has even been said that he hanged six soldiers in one day.

Just what was the fate of this wretched little band has not been recorded. We only know that it did not survive long. With its failure closes the first chapter of the story of French activity on American soil. Fifty years had passed since Columbus had made his great discovery, and as yet no foothold had been gained by France anywhere, nor indeed by any European power on the Atlantic seaboard of the continent.

# Chapter VI

## JEAN RIBAUT

## THE FRENCH AT PORT ROYAL, IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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**The Expedition of Captain Jean Ribaut. — Landing on the St. John's River. — Friendly Natives. — The "Seven Cities of Cibola" again! — The Coast of Georgia. — Port Royal reached and named. — A Fort built and a Garrison left. — Discontent and Return to France.**

NO doubt the severe winters of Canada determined Admiral Coligny, the leader of the Huguenots, or French Protestants, to plant the settlement which he designed as a haven of refuge from persecution, in the southern part of the New World.

Accordingly, on the first day of May, 1562, two little vessels under the command of Captain Jean Ribaut found themselves off the mouth of a great river which, because of the date, they called the River of May, now known as the St. John's.

When they landed, it seemed to the sea-worn Frenchmen as if they had set foot in an enchanted world. Stalwart natives, whom Laudonnière, one of the officers, describes as "mighty and as well shapen and proportioned of body as any people in the world," greeted them hospitably.[1] Overhead was the luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation, giant oaks festooned with gray moss trailing to the ground and towering magnolias opening their great white, fragrant cups. No wonder they thought this newly discovered land the "fairest, fruitfullest, and pleasantest of all the world." One of the Indians wore around his neck a pearl "as great as an acorne at the least" and gladly exchanged it for a bauble. This set the explorers to inquiring for gold and gems,

[1] These people were of the Timucua tribe, one that has since become entirely extinct, and that was succeeded in the occupation of Florida by the warlike Seminoles, an off-shoot of the Creeks. They belonged to the Muskoki group, which included some of the most advanced tribes on our continent. These Southern Indians had progressed further in the arts of life than the Algonquins and the Iroquois, and were distinguished from these by a milder disposition. Gentle and kind toward strangers, they were capable of great bravery when defending their homes or punishing treachery, as the Spanish invaders had already learned to their cost. They dwelt in permanent villages, raised abundant crops of corn, pumpkins, and other vegetables, and, amid forests full of game and rivers teeming with fish, lived in ease and plenty.

and they soon gathered, as they imagined, from the Indians' signs that the "Seven Cities of Cibola"[1] — again the myth that had led Coronado and his Spaniards to bitter disappointment! — were distant only twenty days' journey. Of course, the natives had never heard of Cibola and did not mean anything of the kind. The explorers soon embarked and sailed northward, exploring the coast of Georgia and giving to the rivers or inlets the names of rivers of France, such as the Loire and the Gironde.

On May 27 they entered a wide and deep harbor, spacious enough, it seemed to them, "to hold the argosies of the world." A royal haven it seemed, Port Royal they named it, and Port Royal it is called to this day. They sailed up this noble estuary and entered Broad River. When they landed the frightened Indians fled. Good reason they had to dread the sight of white men, for this was the country of Chicora (South Carolina), the scene of one of those acts of brutal treachery of which the Spaniards, of European nations, were the most frequently all guilty.

Forty-two years before, Lucas Vasquez de

[1] See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America."

Ayllon, a high official of San Domingo, had visited this coast with two vessels. The simple and kindly natives lavished hospitality on the strangers. In return, the Spaniards invited them on board. Full of wondering curiosity, the Indians without suspicion explored every part of the vessels. When the holds were full of sight-seers, their hosts suddenly closed the hatches and sailed away with two ship-loads of wretched captives doomed to toil as slaves in the mines of San Domingo. But Ayllon's treachery was well punished. One of his vessels was lost, and on board the other the captives refused food and mostly died before the end of the voyage. On his revisiting the coast, six years later, nearly his entire following was massacred by the natives, who lured them to a feast, then fell upon them in the dead of night. Treachery for treachery!

The Frenchmen, however, won the confidence of the Indians with gifts of knives, beads, and looking-glasses, coaxed two on board the ships, and loaded them with presents, in the hope of reconciling them to going to France. But they moaned incessantly and finally fled.

These Europeans, however, had not done any-

thing to alarm the natives, and soon the latter were on easy terms with them. Therefore, when it was decided to leave a number of men to hold this beautiful country for the King, Ribaut felt sure of the Indians' friendly disposition. He detailed thirty men, under the command of Albert de Pierria, as the garrison of a fort which he armed with guns from the ship.

It would delight us to know the exact site of this earliest lodgment of Europeans on the Atlantic coast north of Mexico. All that can be said with certainty is that it was not many miles from the picturesque site of Beaufort.

Having executed his commission by finding a spot suitable for a colony, Ribaut sailed away, leaving the little band to hold the place until he should return with a party of colonists. Those whom he left had nothing to do but to roam the country in search of gold, haunted, as they were, by that dream which was fatal to so many of the early ventures in America. They did not find any, but they visited the villages of several chiefs and were always hospitably entertained. When supplies in the neighborhood ran low, they made a journey by boat through inland water-ways to two chiefs on the Savannah River, who furnished

them generously with corn and beans; and when their storehouse burned down, with the provisions which they had just received, they went again to the same generous friends, received a second supply, and were bidden to come back without hesitation, if they needed more. There seemed to be no limit to the good-will of the kindly natives.[1]

Their monotonous existence soon began to pall on the Frenchmen, eager for conquest and gold. They had only a few pearls, given them by the Indians. Of these the natives undoubtedly possessed a considerable quantity, but not baskets heaped with them, as the Spaniards said.

[1] These were Edistoes and Kiowas. The fierce Yemassees came into the country later. The kindness of the Southern Indians, when not provoked by wanton outrage, is strikingly illustrated in the letter of the famous navigator, Giovanni Verrazzano (See "The World's Discoverers"), who visited the Atlantic seaboard nearly about the same time as the kidnapper Ayllon. Once, as he was coasting along near the site of Wilmington, N. C., on account of the high surf a boat could not land, but a bold young sailor swam to the shore and tossed a gift of trinkets to some Indians gathered on the beach. A moment later the sea threw him helpless and bruised at their feet. In an instant he was seized by the arms and legs and, crying lustily for help, was borne off to a great fire — to be roasted on the spot, his shipmates did not doubt. On the contrary, the natives warmed and rubbed him, then took him down to the shore and watched him swim back to his friends.

Roaming the woods or paddling up the creeks, the Frenchmen encountered always the same rude fare, hominy, beans, and fish. Before them was always the same glassy river, shimmering in the fierce midsummer heat; around them the same silent pine forests.

The rough soldiers and sailors, accustomed to spend their leisure in taverns, found the dull routine of existence in Chicora insupportable. Besides, their commander irritated them by undue severity. The crisis came when he hanged a man with his own hands for a slight offence. The men rose in a body, murdered him, and chose Nicholas Barré to succeed him.

Shortly afterward they formed a desperate resolve: they would build a ship and sail home. Nothing could have seemed wilder. Not one of them had any experience of ship-building. But they went to work with a will. They had a forge, tools, and some iron. Soon the forest rang with the sound of the axe and with the crash of falling trees. They laid the keel and pushed the work with amazing energy and ingenuity, caulked the seams with long moss gathered from the neighboring trees and smeared the bottoms and sides with pitch from the pines. The

Indians showed them how to make a kind of cordage, and their shirts and bedding were sewn together into sails. At last their crazy little craft was afloat, undoubtedly the first vessel built on the Atlantic seaboard of America.

They laid in such stores as they could secure by bartering their goods to the Indians, deserted their post, and sailed away from a land where they could have found an easy and comfortable living, if they had put into the task half the thought and labor which they exerted to escape from it.

Few voyages, even in the thrilling annals of exploration, have ever been so full of hardship and suffering as this mad one. Alternate calms and storms baffled, famine and thirst assailed the unfortunate crew. Some died outright; others went crazy with thirst, leaped overboard, and drank their fill once and forever. The wretched survivors drew lots, killed the man whom fortune designated, and satisfied their cravings with his flesh and blood. At last, as they were drifting helpless, with land in sight, an English vessel bore down on them, took them all on board, landed the feeblest, and carried the rest as prisoners to Queen Elizabeth.

# Chapter VII

## RENÉ DE LAUDONNIÈRE PLANTING A COLONY ON THE ST. JOHN'S RIVER

# Chapter VII

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René de Laudonnière's Expedition to the St. John's. — Absurd Illusions of the Frenchmen. — Their Bad Faith to the Indians, and its Fatal Results. — The Thirst for Gold, and how it was rewarded. — Buccaneering. — A Storm-cloud gathers in Spain. — Misery in the Fort on the St. John's. — Relieved by Sir John Hawkins. — Arrival of Ribaut with Men and Supplies. — Don Pedro Menendez captures Fort Caroline and massacres the Garrison and Shipwrecked Crews. — Dominique de Gourgues takes Vengeance.

THE failure at Port Royal did not discourage Admiral Coligny from sending out another expedition, in the spring of 1564, under the command of René de Laudonnière, who had been with Ribaut in 1562. It reached the mouth of the St. John's on the 25th of June and was joyfully greeted by the kindly Indians.

The lieutenant, Ottigny, strolling off into the woods with a few men, met some Indians and was conducted to their village. There, he

gravely tells us, he met a venerable chief who told him that he was two hundred and fifty years old. But, after all, he might probably expect to live a hundred years more, for he introduced another patriarch as his father. This shrunken anatomy, blind, almost speechless, and more like "a dead carkeis than a living body," he said, was likely to last thirty or forty years longer.

Probably the Frenchman had heard of the fabled fountain of Bimini, which lured Ponce de Leon to his ruin, and the river Jordan, which was said to be somewhere in Florida and to possess the same virtue, and he fancied that the gourd of cool water which had just been given him might come from such a spring.[1]

[1] In "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," p. 79, it has been mentioned that when Ponce de Leon fancied that he heard among the Indians of Porto Rico a story of a fountain having the property of giving immortality, this was because he had in his mind a legend that had long been current in Europe. Sir John Maundeville went so far as to say that he had visited these famous waters in Asia and had bathed in them. The legend was, however, much older than Maundeville's time. In the "Romance of Alexander the Great," which was very popular hundreds of years ago, it is related that Alexander's cook, on one of his marches, took a salt fish to a spring to wash it before cooking it. No sooner was the fish put into the water than it swam away. The cook secured a bottle of the magic water, but concealed his knowledge. Later he divulged his secret to Alexander's daughter, who thereupon married him.

This example shows how credulous these Frenchmen were, moving in a world of fancy, the glamour of romantic dreams about the New World still fresh upon them, visions of unmeasured treasures of silver and gold and gems floating through their brains.

It would make a tedious tale to relate all their follies, surrounded as they were by a bountiful nature and a kindly people, and yet soon reduced to abject want. In the party there were brawling soldiers and piratical sailors, with only a few quiet, decent artisans and shop-keepers, but with a swarm of reckless young nobles, who had nothing to recommend them but a long name, and who expected to prove themselves Pizarros in fighting and treasure-getting. Unfortunately, the kind of man who is the backbone of a colony, "the man with the hoe," was not there.

This motley crew soon finished a fort, which stood on the river, a little above what is now called St. John's Bluff and was named Fort

Alexander, when he learned the facts, was furious. He changed his daughter into a sea-nymph and his cook into a sea-monster. Being immortal, undoubtedly they are still disporting themselves in the Indian Ocean. For this story the writer is indebted to Professor George F. Moore, D.D., of the Harvard Divinity School.

Caroline, in honor of Charles the Ninth. Then they began to look around, keen for gold and adventure.

The Indians had shown themselves hostile when they saw the Frenchmen building a fort, which was evidence that they had come to stay. Laudonnière quieted the chief Satouriona by promising to aid him against his enemies, a tribe up the river, called the Thimagoas. Next, misled by a story of great riches up the river, he actually made an alliance with Outina, the chief of the Thimagoas. Thus the French were engaged at the same time to help both sides. But the craze for gold was now at fever-heat, and they had little notion of keeping faith with mere savages. Outina promised Vasseur, Laudonnière's lieutenant, that if he would join him against Potanou, the chief of a third tribe, each of his vassals would reward the French with a heap of gold and silver two feet high. So, at least, Vasseur professed to understand him.

The upshot of the matter was that Satouriona was incensed against the French for breaking faith with him. And to make the situation worse, when he went, unaided, and attacked his enemies and brought back prisoners, the French com-

mander, to curry favor with Outina, compelled Satouriona to give up some of his captives and sent them home to their chief.

All this was laying up trouble for the future. Not a sod had the Frenchmen turned in the way of tilling the soil. The river flowing at their feet teemed with fish. The woods about them were alive with game. But they could neither fish nor hunt. Starving in a land of plenty, ere long they would be dependent for food on these people who had met them so kindly, and whom they had deliberately cheated and outraged.

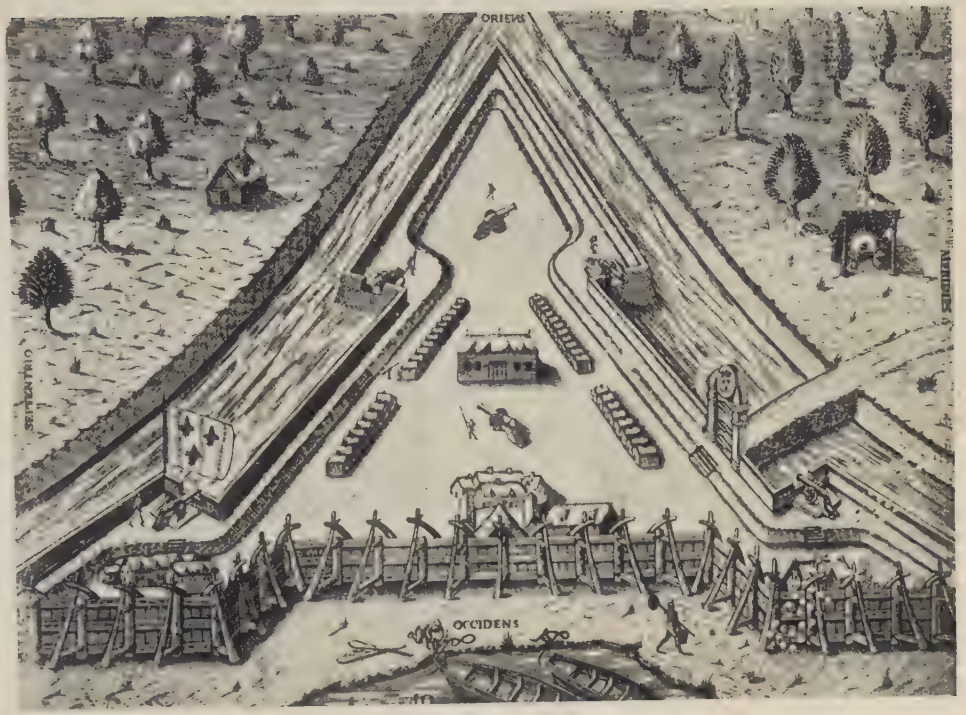
Next we find Vasseur sailing up the river and sending some of his men with Outina to attack Potanou, whose village lay off to the northwest. Several days the war-party marched through a pine-barren region. When it reached its destination the Frenchmen saw, instead of a splendid city of the "kings of the Appalachian mountains," rich in gold, just such an Indian town, surrounded by rough fields of corn and pumpkins, as the misguided Spaniards under Soto had often come upon. The poor barbarians defended their homes bravely. But the Frenchmen's guns routed them. Sack and slaughter followed, with the burning of the town. Then the victors

marched away, with such glory as they had got, but of course without a grain of gold.

At Fort Caroline a spirit of sullenness was growing. Disappointment had followed all their reckless, wicked attempts to get treasure. The Indians of the neighborhood, grown unfriendly, had ceased to bring in food for barter. The garrison was put on half-rations. Men who had come to Florida expecting to find themselves in a land of plenty and to reap a golden harvest, would scarcely content themselves with the monotonous routine of life in a little fort by a hot river, with nothing to do and almost nothing to eat. It was easy to throw all the blame on Laudonnière.

"Why does he not lead us out to explore the country and find its treasures? He is keeping us from making our fortunes," the gentlemen adventurers cried.

Here again we are reminded of the Spaniards under Narvaez and Soto, who struggled through the swamps and interminable pine-barrens of Florida, cheered on by the delusive assurance that when they came to the country of Appalachee they would find gold in abundance. (See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America.")




FORT CAROLINE

Another class of malcontents took matters into their own hands. They were ex-pirates, and they determined to fly the "jolly Roger" once more. They stole two pinnaces, slipped away to sea, and were soon cruising among the West Indies. Hunger drove them into Havana. They gave themselves up and made their peace with the Spanish authorities by telling of their countrymen at Fort Caroline.

Now, Spain claimed the whole of North America, under the Pope's grant. Moreover, Philip of Spain had but lately commissioned as Governor of Florida one Pedro Menendez de Aviles, a ruthless bigot who would crush a Protestant with as much satisfaction as a venomous serpent. Imagine the effect upon his gloomy mind of the news that reached him in Spain, by the way of Havana, of a band of Frenchmen, and, worst of all, heretics settled in Florida, his Florida!

Meanwhile the men at Fort Caroline, all unconscious of the black storm brewing in Spain, continued their grumbling. They had not heard of the fate of the party who had sailed away, and now nearly all were bent on buccaneering. One day a number of them mutinied, overpowered the

guard, seized Laudonnière, put him in irons, carried him on board a vessel lying in the river, and compelled him, under threat of death, to sign a commission for them to cruise along the Spanish Main. Shortly afterward they sailed away in two small vessels that had been built at Fort Caroline.

After their departure, the orderly element that remained behind restored Laudonnière to his command, and things went on smoothly for three or four months. Then, one day, a Spanish brigantine was seen hovering off the mouth of the river. It was ascertained that she was manned by the mutineers, now anxious to return to the fort. Laudonnière sent down a trusty officer in a small vessel that he had built, with thirty soldiers hidden in the hold. The buccaneers let her come alongside without suspicion and began to parley. Suddenly the soldiers came on deck, boarded, and overpowered them, before they could seize their arms. In fact, they were mostly drunk. After a short career of successful piracy, they had suddenly found themselves attacked by three armed vessels. The most were killed or taken, but twenty-six escaped. The pilot, who had been carried away against his will, cunningly steered

the brigantine to the Florida coast; and, having no provisions, they were compelled to seek succor from their old comrades. Still they had wine in abundance, and so they appeared off the mouth of the river drunk, and, as we have seen, were easily taken. A court-martial condemned the ringleader and three others to be shot, which was duly done. The rest were pardoned.

In the meantime the men in the fort had been inquiring diligently in various directions. There was still much talk of mysterious kingdoms, rich in gold. Once more they were duped into fighting his battles by the wily Outina, who promised to lead them to the mines of Appalachee. They defeated his enemies, and there was abundant slaughter, with plenty of scalps for Outina's braves, but, of course, no gold.

The expected supplies from France did not come. The second summer was upon them, with its exhausting heat. The direst want pinched them. Ragged, squalid, and emaciated, they dragged themselves about the fort, digging roots or gathering any plant that might stay the gnawings of hunger. They had made enemies of their neighbors, Satouriona and his people; and Outina, for whom they had done so much, sent them only

a meagre supply of corn, with a demand for more help in fighting his enemies. They accepted the offer and were again cheated by the cunning savage.

Laudonnière draws a pathetic picture of their misery. In the quaint old English translation of Richard Hakluyt it reads thus: "The effects of this hideous famine appeared incontinently among us, for our bones eftsoones beganne to cleave so neere unto the skinne, that the most part of the souldiers had their skinnes pierced thorow with them in many partes of their bodies."

The thoughts of the famished men in Fort Caroline turned homeward with eager longing. They had still remaining one vessel and the Spanish brigantine brought by the mutineers. But they must have another. They began with furious haste to build one, everybody lending a hand. Then came a disastrous check. When things were well under way, the two carpenters, roaming away from the fort in search of food, were helping themselves to some ears of green corn in a field, when Indians fell upon them and killed them.

In this desperate pass Laudonnière took a high-handed step. He sent a party up the river, seized

Outina, and brought him a prisoner to the fort. This had the desired effect. His people pleaded for his release. The Frenchmen agreeed to give him up for a large supply of corn and sent a well-armed party to his village, with the captive chief. The Indians brought in the corn, and the Frenchmen released Outina, according to agreement. But when the former started from the village, each with a bag of corn on his shoulder, to march to their boats, which were at a landing two or three miles away, they were savagely attacked from both sides of the road. They were compelled to drop the corn and fight for their lives. Wherever there was opportunity for an ambuscade, arrows showered upon them from the woods. They kept up the running fight bravely, returning a steady fire, but probably made little impression on their hidden foes swarming under cover. By the time they reached the boats they had two men killed and twenty-two wounded, and but two bags of corn.

It is evident that the social life of these Indians was organized on the community-system, just as we have seen it to be among the Iroquois, of the North. They could supply the Frenchmen with corn in considerable quantities, taking it out of a

stock kept for the whole community. Unlike the Iroquois, however, they lived by families, in individual houses.

The distress at Fort Caroline was now extreme, owing to famine within and war without. In this dark hour, one day, four sails appeared, steering toward the mouth of the river. Was this the long-expected relief from France? Or were these Spanish vessels? Presently "the meteor flag of England" floated out on the breeze, and soon a boat brought a friendly message from the commander, the famous Sir John Hawkins. Being a strenuous Puritan, he was a warm sympathizer with the Protestants of France. Returning from selling a cargo of Guinea negroes to the Spaniards of Hispaniola — not at all a discreditable transaction in those days — he had run short of water and had put into the River of May, to obtain a supply.

Touched by the pitiful condition of the Frenchmen, he opened his ship-stores, gave them wine and biscuit, and sold them other supplies very cheaply, taking cannon in payment. Then, smiling grimly at the two pitiful little craft in which they purposed sailing for France, he offered them all a free passage home. Laudonnière would not

accept a proposal so humiliating, but was very glad to buy a small vessel from Hawkins on credit.

Just when all was in readiness to sail for home came news of an approaching squadron. It was an anxious hour. Were these friends or foes? If foes, the garrison was lost, for the fort was defenceless. Then the river was seen full of armed barges coming up. Imagine the wild joy of the garrison, when the sentry's challenge was answered in French! It was Ribaut. He had come at last, with seven ships, bringing not only soldiers and artisans, but whole families of settlers.

One might imagine that Fort Caroline's dark days had passed. But it was not so. Ribaut had been there just a week when his vessels, lying outside the bar, were attacked, about dusk, by a huge Spanish galleon. The officers were on shore, and the crews cut the cables and put to sea, followed by the Spaniard firing, but not able to overhaul them. Ribaut, on shore, heard the guns and knew what they meant. The Spaniards had come! Before he left France he had been secretly notified of their intentions.

The next morning Don Pedro Menendez in his great galleon ran back to the mouth of the St.

John's. But seeing the Frenchmen drawn up under arms on the beach and Ribaut's smaller vessels inside the bar, all ready for battle, he turned away and sailed southward to an inlet which he called San Augustin. There he found three ships of his unloading troops, guns, and stores. He landed, took formal possession of his vast domain — for the Florida of which he had been appointed Governor was understood by the Spaniards to extend from Mexico to the North Pole — and began to fortify the place. Thus, in September, 1565, was founded St. Augustine, the oldest town of the United States.

One of the French captains, relying on the speed of his ship, had followed Menendez down the coast. He saw what was going on at St. Augustine and hastened back to report to Ribaut that the Spaniards were there in force and were throwing up fortifications. A brilliant idea came to the French commander. His dispersed ships had returned to their anchorage. Why not take them, with all his men and all of Laudonnière's that were fit for service, sail at once, and strike the Spaniards before they could complete their defences, instead of waiting for them to collect their full force and come and attack him, cooped

up on the St. John's ? Such bold moves make the fame of commanders when they succeed, and when they fail are called criminal folly.

Unhappily, Ribaut neglected to consider the weather. It was the middle of September, a season subject to terrific gales. Making all speed, he sailed away with every available man, leaving Laudonnière, sick himself, to hold dismantled Fort Caroline with disabled soldiers, cooks and servants, women and children.

The French ships arrived safely off St. Augustine, just before the dawn, and narrowly missed taking Menendez himself, who was on board a solitary Spanish vessel which lay outside the bar. Just in the nick of time she escaped within the harbor.

Before entering, the Frenchmen prudently reconnoitred the strange port. Meanwhile the breeze freshened into a gale, and the gale rose to a hurricane. The Frenchmen could no longer think of attacking, but only of saving themselves from immediate wreck. Down the coast they worked their way in a driving mist, struggling frantically to get out to sea, in the teeth of the hurricane remorselessly pushing them toward the deadly reefs.

While his enemies were thus fighting for their

lives, Menendez executed a counter-stroke to that of the French captain. Through the raging gale, while every living thing cowered before driving sheets of rain, this man of blood and iron marched away with five hundred picked men. A French deserter from Fort Caroline and an Indian acted as guides, and twenty axemen cleared the way through the dense under-growth.

What a march! Three days they tramped through a low, flooded country, hacking their way through tangled thickets, wading waist-deep through mud and water, for food and drink having only wet biscuit and rain-water, with a sup of wine; for lodging only the oozy ground, with not so much as a rag of canvas over their heads to shelter them from the torrents of rain.

When they reached Fort Caroline their ammunition was wet and their guns useless. They were half-famished and drenched to the skin. Still they were willing to follow their leader in a rush on the fort, relying on cold steel.

The night of September 19th the inmates of Fort Caroline listened to the dismal moaning and creaking of the tall pines, the roar of the blast, and the fitful torrents of rain beating on the cabin-roofs.

In the gray dawn of the 20th a trumpeter who chanced to be astir, saw a swarm of men rushing toward the ramparts. He sounded the alarm; but it was too late. With Spain's battle-cry, "Santiago! Santiago!" (St. James, her patron saint) the assailants swept over the ramparts and poured through a breach.

They made quick work. The shriek of a helpless mother or the scream of a frightened infant was quickly hushed in death. When, however, the first fury of butchery had spent itself, Menendez ordered that such persons should be spared, and fifty were actually saved alive. Every male above the age of fifteen was, from first to last, killed on the spot.

Laudonnière had leaped from his sick-bed and, in his night-shirt, rallied a few men for resistance. But they were quickly killed or dispersed, and he escaped to the woods, where a few half-naked fugitives were gathered. Some of these determined to go back and appeal to the humanity of the Spaniards. The mercy of wolves to lambs! Seeing these poor wretches butchered, the others felt that their only hope was in making their way to the mouth of the river, where lay two or three light craft which Ribaut had left.

Wading through mire and water, their naked limbs cut by the sedge and their feet by roots, they met two or three small boats sent to look out for fugitives, and were taken aboard half dead.

After two or three days of vain waiting for the reappearance of the armed ships, the little flotilla sailed for France, carrying Laudonnière and the other fugitives, some of whom died on the voyage from wounds and exposure.

The Spaniards had Fort Caroline, with one hundred and forty-two dead heretics heaped about it and a splendid booty in armor, clothing, and provisions — all the supplies lately brought by Ribaut from France. Everybody has read how Menendez hanged his few prisoners on trees, with the legend over them, " I do this not as to Frenchmen, but to Lutherans."

Meanwhile Ribaut and his ships had been blown down the coast, vainly struggling to keep away from the reefs, and were finally wrecked, one after another, at various distances to the south of St. Augustine.

Let us pass quickly over the remainder of this sickening story. One day, after Menendez had returned to St. Augustine, Indians came in, breath-

less, with tidings that the crew of a wrecked vessel, struggling northward, had reached an arm of the sea (Matanzas Inlet), which they had no means of crossing. Immediately Menendez started out with about sixty men in boats and met them.

The starving Frenchmen, deceived by his apparent humanity in setting breakfast before them, surrendered, and, having been ferried over the inlet in small batches, were led back into the sand-hills and butchered.

About two weeks later word was brought to Menendez of a second and larger party of Frenchmen who had reached the same fatal spot. Ribaut himself was among them. Not knowing of the horrible fate of his countrymen, he tried to make terms with the Spaniards. While he was parleying with Menendez, two hundred of his followers marched away, declaring that they would rather take chances with the Indians than with these white men whom they distrusted.

Ribaut, having surrendered with the remaining hundred and fifty, was led away behind the sand-hills and his hands were tied. Then he knew that he had been duped, and calmly faced his doom. "We are of earth," he said, "and to earth must return! Twenty years more or less matter little."

As before, the deluded Frenchmen were brought over in tens, led away, tied, and, at a given signal, butchered.

Some twenty days later, Menendez received tidings of a third band of Frenchmen, far to the southward, near Cape Canaveral. This was the party that had refused to surrender with Ribaut. When he reached the place, he saw that they had reared a kind of stockade and were trying to build a vessel out of the timbers of their wrecked ship. He sent a messenger to summon them to surrender, pledging his honor for their safety. Part preferred to take the chance of being eaten by Indians, they said, and they actually fled to the native villages. The rest took Menendez at his word and surrendered, and they had no reason to regret it. He took them to St. Augustine and treated them well. Some of them rewarded the pious efforts of the priests by turning Catholics. The rest were no doubt sent to the galleys.

Everybody is familiar with the story of the vengeance taken by Dominique de Gourgues, a Gascon gentleman. Seeing the French court too supine to insist upon redress, he sold his estate, with the proceeds equipped and manned three small vessels, sailed to the coast of Florida and,

with the assistance of several hundred Indians, who hated the cruel Spaniards, captured Fort Caroline, slaughtered the garrison, hanged the prisoners, and put up over the scene of two butcheries the legend, "Not as to Spaniards, but as to traitors, robbers, and murderers."

Thus closed the last bloody act in the tragedy of French colonization in Carolina and Florida. A long period — one hundred and thirty-four years — was to pass before the French flag would again fly within the territory now embraced in the Southern States.

# Chapter VIII

## SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN IN NOVA SCOTIA

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How the Cod-fishery led to the Fur-trade. — Disastrous Failure of the First Trading-posts. — Champlain's First Visit to the New World. — His Second, and the Determination to which it led. — The Bitter Winter at St. Croix. — Champlain's First Voyage down the New England Coast. — Removal to Port Royal. — Abandonment of Port Royal.

THE disasters in Florida did not abate the activity of Frenchmen on the far northern coast of America.

The earliest attraction was the cod-fishery. Then, as the fishing-folk grew familiar with Newfoundland and the continental shores, their attention was drawn to the skins worn by the natives. What prices they would bring in France! Here was a field that would make richer returns than rough and perilous fishing. In this way the fur-trade, which became the life of Canada, had its beginning.

The first chapters of the story were gloomy and disheartening beyond description. The dreadful scurvy and the cruel cold scourged the newcomers. Party after party perished mis-

erably. The story of one of these is singularly romantic. When Sable Island[1] was reached, its leader, the Marquis de la Roche, landed forty ragamuffins, while he sailed on with the best men of his crew to examine the coast and choose a site for the capital of his promising domain.

Alas! he never returned. A gale swept his little craft out to sea and drove him back to France.

When he landed, the sun of his prosperity had set. Creditors swooped down upon him, political enemies rose in troops, and the "Lieutenant-General of Canada and the adjacent countries" was clapped in jail like a common malefactor. Meanwhile what of the forty promising colonists on Sable Island? They dropped for years out of human knowledge as completely as Henry Hudson when dastardly mutineers set him adrift in an open boat in the bay which bears his name,[2] or Narvaez and his brilliant expedition whose fate was a mystery until the appearance of four survivors, eight years afterward.[3]

[1] A low, sandy island, about one hundred miles southeast of Nova Scotia, to which it belongs.

[2] See "The World's Discoverers," p. 340.

[3] See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," p. 206.

Five years went by, and twelve uncouth creatures stood before Henry the Fourth, clad in shaggy skins, and with long, unkempt beards. They were the remnant of La Roche's jailbirds. He had at last gained a hearing from the King, and a vessel had been sent to Sable Island to bring home the survivors of his party. What a story they told! When months passed, and La Roche came not, they thought they were left to their fate. They built huts of the timbers of a wreck which lay on the beach — for there was not a tree on the island — and so faced the dreary winter. With trapping foxes, spearing seals, and hunting wild cattle, descendants of some which a certain Baron de Léry had left eight years before, they managed to eke out existence, not without quarrels and murders among themselves. At last the remnant was taken off by the vessel which Henry sent for them.

Shaggy and uncouth as they looked, they had a small fortune in the furs which they had accumulated. This wealth had not escaped the notice of the thrifty skipper who brought them home, and he had robbed them. But the King not only compelled the dishonest sea-captain to disgorge his plunder, but aided

its owners with a pension in setting up in the fur-trade.

Such dismal experiences filled more than fifty years of futile effort to colonize New France. Cold and scurvy as effectually closed the North to Frenchmen as Spanish savagery the South.

Then, in this disheartening state of affairs, appeared the man who well deserves the title of the "Father of New France," since his courage and indomitable will steered the tiny "ship of state" through a sea of discouragements.

Samuel de Champlain was born in 1567 at the small French seaport of Brouage, on the Bay of Biscay. In his pious devotion and his unquestioning loyalty to the Church, he was of the "Age of Faith," and he recalls Columbus. In his eager thirst for knowledge and his daring spirit of exploration, he was a modern man, while his practical ability in handling men and affairs reminds us of the doughty Captain John Smith, of Virginia. He came to manhood in time to take part in the great religious wars in France. After the conflict was ended, when his master, Henry the Great, was seated on the throne, Champlain's adventurous spirit led him to the West Indies. Since these were closed to Frenchmen by the jealousy

of the Spaniards, there was a degree of peril in the undertaking which for him was its chief charm. After two years he returned, bringing a journal in which he had set down the most notable things seen in Spanish America. It was illustrated with a number of the quaintest pictures, drawn and colored by himself. He also visited Mexico and Central America. His natural sagacity is shown in his suggesting, even at that early day, that a ship-canal across the Isthmus of Panama would effect a vast saving.

In 1603, in two quaint little vessels, not larger than the fishing craft of to-day, Champlain and Pontgravé, who was interested in the fur-trade, crossed the Atlantic and sailed up the St. Lawrence. When they came to Hochelaga, on the site of Montreal, they found there only a few shiftless and roving Algonquins.[1]

The explorers passed on and boldly essayed, but in vain, to ascend the rapids of St. Louis. When they sailed for France, however, a great purpose was formed in Champlain's mind. What

[1] At the time of Champlain's coming on the scene, fierce war existed between the Algonquins and the Iroquois. This fact accounts for the disappearance of the thrifty Iroquois village, with its palisade and cornfields, which Cartier had found on the spot, sixty-eight years earlier.

he had gathered from the Indians as to the great waters above, the vast chain of rivers and lakes, determined the scene of his future activity.

His next venture in the New World was made in association with the Sieur de Monts, a Huguenot gentleman, who had obtained leave to plant a colony in Acadia (Nova Scotia). With a band of colonists — if we can apply that name to a motley assemblage of jailbirds and high-born gentlemen, of Catholic priests and Protestant ministers — they sailed for America in 1604.

Thirty years of bloody warfare in France had but recently come to an end, and the followers of the two faiths were still full of bitter hatred. It is easy, therefore, to believe Champlain's report that monk and minister quarreled incessantly and sometimes came to blows over religious questions.

This state of feeling came near to causing the death of an innocent man. After the New World had been reached, and when the expedition was coasting along the eastern shore of the Bay of Fundy, seeking a place for a settlement, one day a party went ashore to stroll in the woods. On reassembling, a priest named Nicolas Aubry was missing. Trumpets were sounded and cannon fired from the ships. All in vain. There

was no reply but the echo of the ancient forest. Then suspicion fell upon a certain Huguenot with whom Aubry had often quarreled. He was accused of having killed the missing priest. In spite of his strenuous denial of the charge, many persons firmly believed him guilty. Thus matters stood for more than two weeks. One day, however, the crew of a boat that had been sent back to the neighborhood where the priest had disappeared heard a strange sound and saw a small black object in motion on the shore. Rowing nearer, they descried a man waving a hat on a stick. Imagine their surprise and joy when they recognized Aubry! He had become separated from his comrades, had lost his way, and for sixteen days of misery and terror had kept himself alive on berries and wild fruits.

The place finally selected for settlement was a dreary island near the mouth of the St. Croix River, which now forms the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick. It had but one recommendation, namely, that it was admirably suited for defence, and these Frenchmen, reared in war-time, seem to have thought more of that single advantage than of the far more pressing needs of a colony. Cannon were landed, a bat-

tery was built, and a fort was erected. Then buildings quickly followed, and by the autumn the whole party was well housed in its settlement, called Sainte Croix (Holy Cross). The river they named differently, but it has since borne the title of that ill-starred colony.

When winter came, the island, exposed to the fierce winds blowing down the river, was fearfully cold. Ice floated by in great masses, frequently cutting off the settlers from the mainland and from their supplies of wood and water. The terror of those days, the scurvy, soon appeared, and by the spring nearly half of the seventy-nine men lay in the little cemetery. Of the survivors the greater number had no other desire than to flee from the scene of so much misery. They were cheered, however, when Pontgravé arrived from France with supplies and forty new men.

In the hope of securing a more favorable site in a warmer latitude, Champlain, who already had explored a part of the coast and had visited and named the island of Mount Desert, set out in a small vessel with Monts and about thirty men on a voyage of discovery. They followed the shores of Maine closely, and by the middle of July were off Cape Ann. Then they entered

Massachusetts Bay. The islands of Boston Harbor, now so bare, Champlain describes as covered with trees. The aboriginal inhabitants of the region seem to have felt a friendly interest in the distinguished strangers. Canoe-loads of them came out to gaze on the strange spectacle of the little vessel, with its bearded and steel-clad crew.

Down the South Shore the voyagers held their way, anchoring for the night near Brant Rock. A head wind drove them to take shelter in a harbor which Champlain called Port St. Louis, the same which, fifteen years afterward, welcomed the brave Pilgrims. The shore was at that time lined with wigwams and garden-patches. The inhabitants were very friendly. While some danced on the beach, others who had been fishing came on board the vessel without any sign of alarm, showing their fish-hooks, which were of barbed bone lashed to a slip of wood.[1]

The glistening white sand of a promontory

[1] These Massachusetts Algonquins evidently were of a higher type than their kinsmen on the St. Lawrence. Far from depending wholly on hunting and fishing, they lived in permanent villages and were largely an agricultural people, growing considerable crops. At the time of the coming of the Pilgrims, whom they instructed in corn-planting, this thrifty native population had been sadly wasted by an epidemic of small-pox.

stretching out into the sea suggested to Champlain the name which he bestowed, Cap Blanc (White Cape, now Cape Cod). Doubling it, he held his way southward as far as Nausett Harbor. Here misfortune met the party. As some sailors were seeking fresh water behind the sand-hills, an Indian snatched a kettle from one of them. Its owner, pursuing him, was killed by his comrades' arrows. The French fired from the vessel, and Champlain's arquebuse burst, nearly killing him. In the meantime several Indians who were on board leaped so quickly into the water that only one was caught. He was afterward humanely released.

This untoward incident, together with a growing scarcity of provisions, decided the voyagers to turn back. Early in August they reached St. Croix.

Discouraged as to finding a site on the New England coast, Champlain and Monts began to look across the Bay of Fundy, at first called Le Fond de la Baye (the bottom of the bay).

A traveler crossing this water from the west will see a narrow gap in the bold and rugged outline of the shore. Entering it, he will be struck with its romantic beauty, and he will note the

tide rushing like a mill-race, for this narrow passage is the outlet of a considerable inland water. The steamer, passing through, emerges into a wide, land-locked basin offering an enchanting view. Fourteen miles northward is Annapolis Harbor, shut in on every side by verdant hills.

This is the veritable Acadia, the beautiful land of Evangeline, and here was made the first settlement of Frenchmen in North America that had any degree of permanence.

The explorers had discovered and entered this enchanting basin in the previous summer. Now its beauty recurred to them, and they determined to remove thither. In their vessels they transported their stores and even parts of their buildings across the Bay of Fundy and laid the foundation of a settlement which they called Port Royal, afterward renamed by loyal Britons Annapolis, in honor of Queen Anne.

The season proved very severe, and in the spring it was decided to persevere in the project of planting a colony, if possible, in a warmer region. For the second time Champlain sailed down the New England coast.

At Chatham Harbor, as the place is now called, five of the voyagers, contrary to orders,

were spending the night ashore. The word quickly passed around among the Indians that a number of the palefaces were in their power. Through the dark hours of the night dusky warriors gathered at the meeting-place, until they numbered hundreds. Then they stole silently toward the camp-fire where the unsuspecting Frenchmen lay sleeping. Suddenly a savage yell aroused them, and arrows fell in a shower upon them. Two never rose, slain where they lay. The others fled to their boat, fairly bristling with arrows sticking in them, according to the quaint picture which Champlain made.

In the meantime, he, with Poutrincourt and eight men, aroused from their sleep by the horrid cries on the shore, had leaped from their berths, snatched their weapons, and, clad only in their shirts, pulled to the rescue of their comrades. They charged, and the dusky enemy fled into the woods. Mournfully the voyagers buried their dead, while the barbarians, from a safe distance, jibed and jeered at them. No sooner had the little party rowed back to the ship than they saw the Indians dig up the dead bodies and burn them. The incensed Frenchmen, by a treacherous device, lured some of the assailants within

their reach, killed them, and cut off their heads.

Then, discouraged by the savage hostility of the natives, they turned homeward and, late in November, the most of the men sick in body and at heart, reached Port Royal.

Thus ended disastrously Champlain's second attempt to find a lodgment on the New England coast. But he was not a man to be disheartened by difficulties.

Soon the snows of another winter began to fall upon Port Royal, that lonely outpost of civilization. But let us not imagine that the little colony was oppressed with gloom. There were jolly times around the blazing logs in the rude hall, of winter evenings. They had abundant food, fine fresh fish, speared through the ice of the river or taken from the bay, with the flesh of moose, caribou, deer, beaver, and hare, and of ducks, geese, and grouse, and they had organized an "Order of Good Fellowship."

Each member of the company was Grand Master for one day, and it was his duty to provide for the table and then to preside at the feast which he had prepared. This arrangement put each one on his mettle to lay up a good store for

the day when he would do the honors of the feast. The Indian chiefs sat with the Frenchmen as their guests, while the warriors and squaws and children squatted on the floor, awaiting the bits of food that were sure to come to them.

In this picture we have an illustration of the ease with which the Frenchmen always adapted themselves to the natives. It was the secret of their success in forming alliances with the Indians, and it was in marked contrast with the harsh conduct of the English and the ruthless cruelty of the Spaniards. No Indian tribes inclined to the English, except the Five Nations, and these chiefly because their sworn enemies, the Algonquins of the St. Lawrence, were hand in glove with the French. None came into contact with the Spaniards who did not execrate them. But the sons of France mingled freely with the dusky children of the soil, made friends of them and quickly won numbers of them to learn their language and adopt their religion. From intermarriages of Frenchmen with Indian women there grew up in Canada a large class of half-breed "voyageurs" (travelers) and "coureurs de bois" (wood-rangers), who in times of peace were skilful hunters and pioneers, and in times

of war helped to bind fast the ties between the two races.

In this pleasant fashion the third winter of the colony wore away with little suffering. Only four men died. With the coming of spring all began to bestir themselves in various activities, and everything looked hopeful.

Alas! a bitter disappointment was at hand. News came from France that Monts's monopoly of the fur-trade had been rescinded. The merchants of various ports in France, incensed at being shut out from a lucrative traffic, had used money freely at court and had succeeded in having his grant withdrawn. All the money spent in establishing the colony was to go for nothing.

Worst of all, Port Royal must be abandoned. Its cornfields and gardens must become a wilderness, and the fair promise of a permanent colony must wither. It was a cruel blow to Champlain and his associates, and not less so to the Indians, who followed their departing friends with bitter lamentations.

# Chapter IX

## SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN (*Continued*)
## THE FRENCH ON THE ST. LAWRENCE AND THE GREAT LAKES

# Chapter IX

## SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN (*Continued*)
## THE FRENCH ON THE ST. LAWRENCE AND THE GREAT LAKES

Champlain's Motives in returning to America. — How the Monopoly of the Fur-trade affected the Men engaged in it. — Fight with Free-traders at Tadoussac. — The Founding of Quebec. — The First Bitter Winter. — Champlain starts on an Exploration. — Discovery of Lake Champlain. — Fight with a Band of Iroquois. — Its Unfortunate Consequences. — Another Fight with Iroquois. — Montreal founded. — Champlain's most Important Exploration. — Lake Huron discovered. — A Deer Drive. — Defeated by Iroquois. — Champlain lost in the Woods. — His Closing Years and Death.

HITHERTO Champlain has appeared at a disadvantage, because he was in a subordinate capacity. Now we shall see his genius shine, because he is in command.

In 1608 he returned to America, not, however, to Nova Scotia, but to the St. Lawrence. Three motives chiefly actuated him. The first was the unquenchable desire to find a water-way through our continent to China. When, in 1603, he ex-

plored the St. Lawrence as far as the rapids beyond Montreal, what he heard from the Indians about the great inland seas created in his mind a strong conviction that through them was a passage to the Pacific, such as the early explorers, notably Henry Hudson (See "The World's Discoverers," p. 328), believed to exist.

The next motive was exceedingly practical. Champlain was deeply impressed with the need of planting strongholds on the great streams draining the vast fur-yielding region, so as to shut out intruders and secure the precious traffic to his countrymen. Let France, he argued, plant herself boldly and strongly on the St. Lawrence, that great highway for the savage's canoe and the white man's ship, and she would control the fur-trade.

The other idea active in his mind was an earnest desire for the conversion of the Indians. It is undeniable that France was genuinely interested in christianizing the natives of America. Some of the most heroic spirits who came to our country came with that object in view, and Champlain was too devoted a Catholic not to share the Church's concern on this point.

So he came out, in the spring of 1608, in com-

mand of a vessel furnished by the Sieur de Monts for exploration and settlement. When he reached the desolate trading-post of Tadoussac,[1] an incident occurred that illustrates the reluctance of men to submit to curtailment of their natural rights. If it was hard for men in France to submit patiently to being shut out of a lucrative business by the government's granting the sole right to particular persons, how far more difficult must it have been for men who were on the coasts or rivers of the New World, who had already been engaged in the traffic, and who had opportunities to trade constantly inviting them! An Indian, let us say, paddled alongside with a bundle of valuable furs, eager to get the things which the white men had and beseeching them to barter. But no; they must not deal with him, because they were not employed to buy and sell for the one man who controlled the business.

Of course, many evaded the law, and there was a vast deal of illicit trading in the lonely forests of New France which the watchful eye of the

[1] This place, at the confluence of the Saguenay with the St. Lawrence, was peculiarly well situated for the fur-trade. The Saguenay, having its head-waters far to the north in the dreary region near Hudson Bay, rich in furs, was the route by which the natives of that wild country brought their peltries to market.

monopolist could not penetrate. Often there were violent and bloody collisions between his employees and the free-traders.

Now, when Champlain reached Tadoussac he found his associate, Pontgravé, who had sailed a week ahead of him, in serious trouble. On arriving at Tadoussac, he had found some Basques driving a brisk trade with the Indians. These Basques were fierce fellows. They belonged to one of the oldest races in the world, a race that has inhabited the slopes of the Pyrenees, on both the Spanish and the French sides, so far back that nobody knows when it came thither; moreover, a sullen and vengeful race. They were also daring voyagers, and their fishing-vessels had been among the earliest to visit the New World, where their name for cod-fish, baccalaos, had been given to Newfoundland, which bears that title on the oldest maps. They had traded with the Indians long before any grant of monopoly to anybody, and they felt that such a grant deprived them of a long-established right.

When Pontgravé showed the royal letters and forbade the traffic, these men swore roundly that they would trade in spite of the King, and backed

up their words by promptly opening fire on Pontgravé with cannon and musketry. He was wounded, as well as two of his men, and a third was killed. Then they boarded his vessel and carried away all his cannon, small arms, and ammunition, saying that they would restore them when they had finished their trading and were ready to return home.

Champlain's arrival completely changed the situation. The Basques, who were now the weaker party, were glad to come to terms, agreeing to go away and employ themselves in whale-fishing. Leaving the wounded Pontgravé to load his ship with a rich cargo of furs, Champlain held his way up the St. Lawrence.

A place where the broad stream is shut in between opposing heights and which the Indians called Kebec ("The Narrows"), seemed an ideal situation for a stronghold, being indeed a natural fortress. On this spot, between the water and the cliffs, where the Lower Town now stands, Champlain, in 1608, founded the city of Quebec. Its beginnings were modest indeed — three wooden buildings containing quarters for the leader and his men, a large storehouse, and a fort with two or three small cannon commanding the river.

The Basques, all this time, were sullenly brooding over the wrong which they conceived had been done them. One day Champlain was secretly informed of a plot among his men to murder him and deliver Quebec into their hands. He acted with his usual cool determination. Through the agency of the man who had betrayed them, the four ringleaders were lured on board a small vessel with a promise of enjoying some wine which was said to have been sent from Tadoussac by their friends, the Basques. They were seized, and the arch-conspirator was immediately hanged, while the other three were taken by Pontgravé back to France, where they were sentenced to the gallows. After these prompt measures Champlain had no more trouble with his men.

Now he was left with twenty-eight men to hold Quebec through the winter. One would think that the cruel sufferings endured by Cartier on the same spot, seventy-three years earlier, would have intimidated him. But he was made of stern stuff. Soon the rigors of a Canadian winter settled down on the little post. For neighbors the Frenchmen had only a band of Indians, half-starving and wholly wretched, as was the usual

winter condition of the roving Algonquins, who never tilled the soil or made sufficient provision against the cold. The French often gave them food which they needed sorely. Champlain writes of seeing some miserable wretches seize the carcass of a dog which had lain for months on the snow, break it up, thaw, and eat it.

It proved a fearful winter. The scurvy raged among the Frenchmen, and only eight, half of them sick, remained alive out of the twenty-eight. Thus this first winter at Quebec makes the first winter of the Pilgrims at Plymouth seem, by comparison, almost a mild experience.

With the early summer Pontgravé was back from France, and now Champlain, strenuous as ever, determined on carrying out his daring project of exploration, in the hope of finding a route to China. His plan was to march with a war-party of Algonquins and Hurons against their deadly foes, the Iroquois, thus penetrating the region which he wished to explore.

Going up the St. Lawrence as far as the mouth of the Richelieu or Sorel River, and then ascending this stream, the party entered the enemy's country. On the way Champlain had opportunities of witnessing a most interesting ceremony.

At every camp the medicine-man, or sorcerer, pitched the magic lodge, of poles covered with dirty deerskin robes, and retired within to hold communion with the unseen powers, while the worshipers sat around in gaping awe. Soon a low muttering was heard, the voice of the medicine-man invoking the spirits. Then came the alleged answer, the lodge rocking to and fro in violent motion. Champlain could see that the sorcerer was shaking the poles. But the Indians fully believed that the Manitou was present and acting. Next they heard its voice, they declared, speak in an unearthly tone, something like the whining of a young puppy. Then they called on Champlain to see fire and smoke issuing from the peak of the lodge. Of course, he did not see any such thing but they did, and were satisfied.[1]

[1] The Indians were much given to various forms of divination by which they believed that they ascertained the will of the unseen powers.

Jonathan Carver, who traveled much among the western tribes, about 1766, relates that once when he was with a band of Christinos, or Crees, on the north shore of Lake Superior, anxiously awaiting the coming of certain traders with goods, the chief told him that the medicine-man, or conjurer, or "clairvoyant" as we should say, would try to get some information from the Manitou. Elaborate preparations were made. In a spacious tent, brightly lighted with torches of pitch-pine, the conjurer, wrapped in a large elk-skin, and corded with about forty yards of elk-hide lariat —

Soon the river broadened, and Champlain, first of all white men, gazed on the beautiful lake that bears his name. Now traveling became dangerous, and the party moved only in the night, for fear of suddenly encountering a band of the enemy, whom they hoped to surprise. Their plan was to traverse the length of Lake Champlain, then pass into Lake George and follow it to a convenient landing, thence carry their canoes through the woods to the Hudson River, and descend it to some point where they might strike an outlying town of the Mohawks.[1]

"bound up like an Egyptian mummy" — was laid down in the midst of the assembly, in full view of all.

Presently he began to mutter, then to jabber a mixed jargon of several native tongues, sometimes raving, sometimes praying, till he had worked himself into a frenzy and foamed at the mouth.

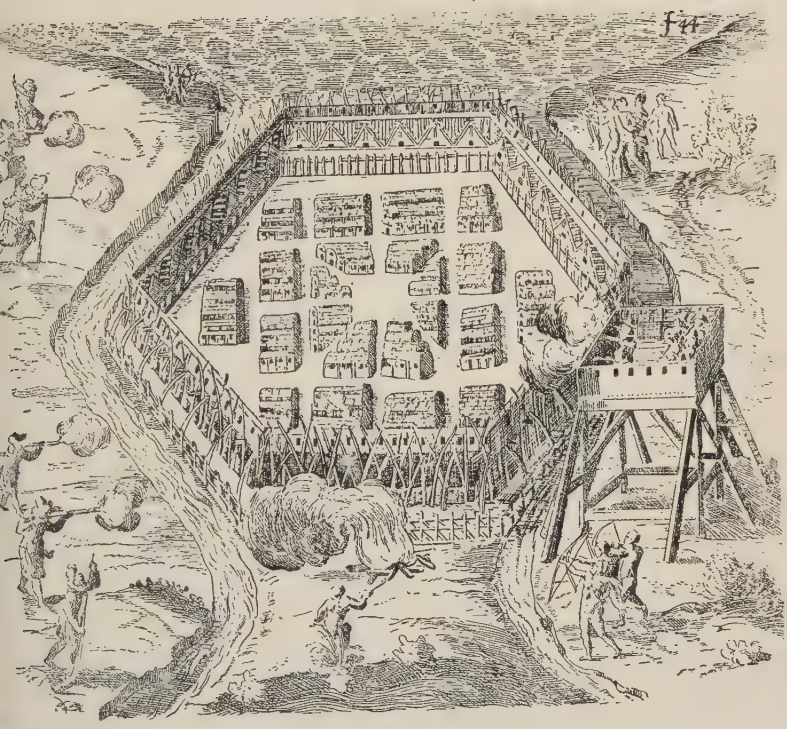
Suddenly he leaped to his feet, shaking off his bands "as if they were burnt asunder," and announced that the Manitou had revealed to him that, just at noon on the next day, there would arrive a canoe the occupants of which would bring news as to the expected traders.

On the next day Carver and his Indian friends were on the bluff watching. At the appointed hour a canoe (undoubtedly sent by the conjurer) came into view and was hailed by the Indians with shouts of delight. It brought tidings of the early coming of the traders.

[1] This was the established route used by the Indians. By it one could pass by water, with only the short carry between Lake George and the Hudson, all the way from the Great Lakes to the ocean.

They were saved the trouble of so long a journey. One night, while they were still on Lake Champlain, they caught sight of dark objects moving on the water. A fleet of Iroquois canoes they proved to be. Each party saw the other and forthwith began to yell defiance. The Iroquois immediately landed and began to cut down trees and form a barricade, preferring to fight on shore. The Hurons remained in their canoes all night, not far off, yelling themselves hoarse. Indeed, both parties incessantly howled abuse, sarcasm, and threats at each other. They spoke the same language, the Hurons being a branch of the Iroquois family.

When morning came the allies moved to the attack, Champlain encased in steel armor. He and two other Frenchmen whom he had with him, each in a separate canoe, kept themselves covered with Indian robes, so that their presence was not suspected. The party landed without any opposition and made ready for the fray. Soon the Iroquois filed out from their barricade and advanced, some two hundred in number, many of them carrying shields of wood covered with hide, others protected by a rude armor of tough twigs interlaced.



Fort of the Iroquois

As they confidently marched forward, imagine their amazement when the ranks of the enemy suddenly opened, and their steel-clad champion stepped to the front! It was an apparition that might well cause consternation among these men of the wilderness, not one of whom probably had ever seen a white man.

What follows is thus described by Champlain: "I looked at them, and they looked at me. When I saw them getting ready to shoot their arrows at us, I leveled my arquebuse, which I had loaded with four balls, and aimed straight at one of the three chiefs. The shot brought down two and wounded another. On this, our Indians set up such a yelling that one could not have heard a thunder-clap, and all the while the arrows flew thick on both sides. The Iroquois were greatly astonished and frightened to see two of their men killed so quickly, in spite of their arrow-proof armor." When one of Champlain's companions fired a shot from the woods, panic seized them, and they fled in terror.

The victory was complete. Some of the Iroquois were killed, more were taken, and their camp, canoes, and provisions all fell into the hands of the visitors.

This fight, insignificant in itself, had tremendous consequences. Champlain had inconsiderately aroused the vengeance of a terrible enemy. From that day forth, the mighty confederacy of the Five Nations, embracing the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, was the deadly foe of the French. This circumstance gave to the English, in the long struggle for the supremacy of America, the aid of the craftiest, boldest, and most formidable native warriors on the continent.

Another noteworthy thing is that this fight occurred in just the year in which Hudson ascended the river since named for him. His exploration, made in the interest of the Dutch, led to their planting trading-posts on the river.[1]

[1] The thrifty Hollanders at once saw the importance of securing the fur-trade of the region thus opened to them. To protect it, they first established at the mouth of the river, on Manhattan Island, the post out of which the city of New York has grown. Next they reared a fort on an island a little below Albany; and, in 1623, they built Fort Orange, on the site of Albany. It soon became a most important point, because, until Fort Stanwix, on the Mohawk, was built, it was the nearest white man's post to which the Indians of the great Iroquois confederacy might bring their peltries. We hear much of it in the early history.

The great trading-stations were always on big rivers, because these drained a wide territory, and the supply of furs lasted long. As the French pushed further westward, as we shall see, important stations were opened on the Great Lakes.

Previously the Iroquois had been at a disadvantage, because their enemies, the Hurons, could procure fire-arms from the French, whereas they had not any. But the Dutch traders on the Hudson soon began to sell guns to the Iroquois; and thus one of the first effects of the coming of white men into the wilderness was to equip these two savage races for a deadlier warfare.

The next summer Champlain had another opportunity of taking a hand in a fight between Indians. A canoe came with the exciting news that, a few miles away in the woods, a band of Algonquins had surrounded an invading party of Iroquois who were making a desperate stand within an inclosure of trees. His Indians snatched their weapons and raced for the scene, shouting to Champlain to follow, but leaving him and four of his men to find their way as best they could. They were soon lost in the dense woods. The day was hot, and the air was full of mosquitoes. The Frenchmen struggled on through black mud and knee-deep water and over fallen trees and slimy logs, panting under their heavy corselets; but not a sound could they hear to guide them to the spot.

At last two Indians running to the fight over-

took them and led them to the place where the Iroquois, within a circular barricade of trees and interlaced boughs, were fighting savagely. They had beaten off their assailants with heavy loss. When the Frenchmen came up, they received a flight of well-aimed arrows from the desperate defenders. One split Champlain's ear and tore through the muscles of his neck. Another inflicted a similar wound on one of his men. The Indians, seeing the Europeans' heads and breasts covered with steel, had aimed at their faces. But fire-arms soon changed the situation. The Frenchmen ran up close to the barricade, thrust their weapons through the openings, and poured dismay and death among the defenders. The Indian assailants, too, encouraged by this example, rushed in and dragged out the trees of the barricade. At the same time a boat's crew of fur-traders, who had been attracted by the firing, rushed upon the scene and used their guns with deadly effect.

The Iroquois, surrounded and overwhelmed by numbers, fought to the last. The most were killed on the spot. Only fifteen survived and were taken prisoners. Thus the fiercest warriors of North America experienced a second disaster

which could not but result in deepening their hatred of the French. These early successes of Champlain were dearly paid for by his countrymen long after he was dead.

In the following spring (1611) Champlain did another memorable thing: he established a post, which afterward grew into a trading-station, at Montreal. Thus the two oldest and most historic towns of Canada owe their foundation to him.

Champlain purposed accompanying a great force of Algonquins and Hurons in an inroad into the Iroquois country. The savage warriors, however, unwilling to wait for him, set out for their villages, taking with them an adventurous friar named Le Caron. But Champlain was not to be baulked by this circumstance. He immediately started on the track of the larger party, with ten Indians and two Frenchmen, one of whom was his interpreter, Etienne Brulé. He went up the Ottawa River, made a portage through the woods, and launched his canoes on the waters of Lake Nipissing, passing through the country of a tribe so sunk in degrading superstitions, that the Jesuits afterward called them "the Sorcerers."

After resting here two days and feasting on

fish and deer, which must have been very welcome diet after the scant fare of the journey, he descended French River, which empties the waters of Nipissing into Lake Huron. On the way down, hunger again pinched his party, and they were forced to subsist on berries which, happily, grew in great abundance. At last a welcome sight greeted Champlain. Lake Huron lay before him. He called it the "Mer Douce" (Fresh-water Sea).

Down the eastern shore of the Georgian Bay for more than a hundred miles Champlain took his course, through countless islets, to its lower end. Then his Indians landed and struck into a well-beaten trail leading into the heart of the Huron country, between Lakes Huron and Ontario. Here he witnessed a degree of social advancement far beyond that of the shiftless Algonquins on the St. Lawrence. Here were people living in permanent villages protected by triple palisades of trees, and cultivating fields of maize and pumpkins and patches of sunflowers. To him, coming from gloomy desolation, this seemed a land of beauty and abundance.

The Hurons welcomed him with lavish hospitality, expecting that he would lead them to

victory. He was taken from village to village. In the last he found the friar Le Caron with his twelve Frenchmen. Now there were feasts and dances for several days, while the warriors assembled for the march into the Iroquois country. Then the little army set out, carrying their canoes until they came to Lake Simcoe. After crossing this there came another portage, after which the canoes were launched again on the waters of the river Trent. Down this they made their way until they came to a suitable spot for a great hunt. The Frenchmen watched the proceedings and took part in them with great zest. Five hundred men, forming an extended line, moved through the woods, gradually closing in toward a wooded point on which they drove the game. Then they swept along it to its very end. The frightened deer, driven into the water, were easily killed by the canoe-men with spears and arrows. Such a great hunt supplied the place of a commissary department and furnished food for many days.

Out upon Lake Ontario the fleet of frail barks boldly ventured, crossed it safely, and landed on the shore of what is now New York State. Here the Indians hid their canoes. Now they were on the enemy's soil and must move cautiously. For

four days they filed silently through the woods, crossing the outlet of Lake Oneida, and plunged deep into the Iroquois country. One day they came upon a clearing in which some of the people of the neighboring villages were gathering corn and pumpkins.

Some of the impetuous young Hurons uttered their savage yell and rushed upon them. But the Iroquois seized their weapons and defended themselves so well that they drove back their assailants with some loss. Only the Frenchmen, opening fire, saved the Hurons from worse disaster. Then the attacking party moved on to the village. This Champlain found to be far more strongly defended than any he had ever seen among the Indians. There were not less than four rows of palisades, consisting of trunks of trees set in the earth and leaning outward; and there was a kind of gallery well supplied with stones and provided with wooden gutters for quenching fire.

Something more than the hap-hazard methods of the Hurons was needed to capture this stronghold, and Champlain instructed them how to set about it. Under his direction, they built a wooden tower high enough to overlook the palisades and

large enough to shelter four or five marksmen. When this had been planted within a few feet of the fortification, three arquebusiers mounted to the top and thence opened a deadly raking fire along the crowded galleries. Had the assailants confined themselves to this species of attack and heeded Champlain's warnings, the result would have been different. But their fury was ungovernable. Yelling their war-cry, they exposed themselves recklessly to the stones and arrows of the Iroquois. One, bolder than the rest, ran forward with firebrands to burn the palisade, and others followed with wood to feed the flame. But torrents of water poured down from the gutters quickly extinguished it. In vain Champlain strove to restore order among the yelling savages. Finding himself unable to control his frenzied allies, he and his men busied themselves with picking off the Iroquois along the ramparts. After three hours of this bootless fighting, the Hurons fell back, with seventeen warriors wounded.[1]

Champlain himself was disabled by two wounds,

[1] We may wonder at so small a list of casualties. The fact is that, until the introduction of fire-arms, Indian open fighting was not very deadly. They might yell and screech and shoot arrows at each other for hours, with very little loss. Surprises and ambuscades were their most effective methods.

one in the knee and one in the leg, which hindered him from walking. Still he urged the Hurons to renew the attack. But in vain. From overweening confidence the fickle savages had passed to the other extreme. Nothing could inspire them to another assault. Moreover, Champlain had lost much of his peculiar influence over them. They had fancied that, with him in front, success was sure. Now they saw that he could be wounded, and by Indian weapons, and they had experienced a defeat the blame of which they undoubtedly laid at his door. His "medicine"[1] was not the sure thing they had thought it to be, and no words of his could raise their spirits. After a few days of ineffective skirmishing, they hastily broke up in retreat, carrying their wounded in the centre, while the Iroquois pursued and harassed the flanks and rear.

Champlain was treated like the rest of the wounded. Each was carried in a rude basket made of green withes, on the back of a stout warrior. For days he traveled in this way, enduring, he says, greater torment than he had

[1] This word came into general use among French *voyageurs* and, later, among white men generally, as the equivalent of an Indian word denoting mysterious power.

ever before experienced, "for the pain of the wound was nothing to that of being bound and pinioned on the back of a savage." As soon as he could bear his weight, he was glad to walk.

When the shore of Lake Ontario was reached, the canoes were found untouched, and the crest-fallen band embarked and recrossed to the opposite side. Now Champlain experienced one of the consequences of his loss of prestige. The Hurons had promised him an escort to Quebec. But nobody was willing to undertake the journey. The great war-party broke up, the several bands going off to their wonted hunting-grounds, and Champlain was left with no choice but to spend the winter with the Hurons. One of their chiefs invited him to share his lodge, and he was glad to accept this hospitality.

Shortly afterward he met with a notable adventure. The Hurons were waiting for a hard frost to give them passage over the lakes and marshes that lay between them and their towns. Meanwhile they occupied themselves with hunting. One day Champlain was out with them. For ten days twenty-five men had been at work, preparing for a huge "drive." They had built a strong enclosure, from the opening of which

ran two diverging fences of posts interlaced with boughs, extending more than half a mile into the woods. At daybreak the most of the warriors formed a long line and, with shouts and the clattering of sticks, drove the deer toward the pound. The frightened animals rushed down the converging lines of fence into the trap, where they were easily killed.

Champlain was enjoying watching the sport, when a strange bird lured him off, and he lost his way. The day was cloudy, there was no sun to guide him, and his pocket-compass he had left in camp.

All his efforts to retrace his steps failed. At last night came on, and he lay down and slept, supperless, at the foot of a tree. The whole of the next day he wandered, but in the afternoon he came to a pond where there were some water-fowl along the shore. He shot some of these, kindled a fire, cooked his food, and ate with relish. It was dreary November weather, and a cold rain set in. He was without covering of any kind. But he was used to hardships, and he said his prayers and calmly lay down to sleep.

Another day of bewildered wandering followed, and another night of discomfort. On the next

day he came upon a little brook. The happy thought came to him that, if he should follow this, it would lead him to the river, near which the hunters were encamped. This he did, and when he came in sight of the river, with a lighter heart he kindled his fire, cooked his supper, and bivouacked once more. The next day he easily made his way down the river to the camp, where there was great joy at his coming. The Indians had searched for him far and wide. From that day forth they never let him go into the forest alone.

The scene of this adventure seems to have been somewhere to the north or north-east of the site of Kingston, Ontario. The Indians encamped here several weeks, during which they killed a hundred and twenty deer. When the hard cold came and the marshy country was solid with ice, they resumed their journey, with their sledges laden with venison. Champlain went on with them from village to village, until he reached the one in which he had left Brother Le Caron. When spring came, the Frenchmen traveled homeward by the same circuitous route by which they had come, by the way of Lake Huron and the Ottawa River.

Champlain's arrival at Quebec caused universal rejoicing. He was welcomed as one risen from the grave, for the Indians had reported him dead, and a solemn service of thanksgiving for his safety was held.

Here closes the most adventurous period of his career. Though his heart was in the work of exploration, he was destined to spend his remaining years chiefly in nursing the feeble little colony at Quebec. He had not only to hold the balance even between monks and traders, but to guard the puny little colony against frequent Indian outbreaks.

Eighteen years had passed since the foundation of Quebec, and still the population consisted of only one hundred and five persons, men, women, and children. Only two or three families supported themselves from the soil. All the rest were there either as priests or as soldiers or as traders bent on enriching themselves as quickly as possible and then returning to France. This was one of the greatest difficulties that Champlain had to contend with. The French at this time had little thought of anything else than developing a great trade, whereas the English colonists, with strong good sense, set themselves to tilling

the soil and to making true homes for themselves and their children's children. The result was that Canada long remained a sickly infant, while the English colonies were growing sturdily.

An event that must have deeply tried Champlain was the surrender of Quebec by his government to the English. He actually spent some time in London as a prisoner, being treated with great consideration. Eventually, however, Quebec was restored to its former masters and Champlain to the governorship.

Thus were spent the last years of his life. He died on Christmas day, in 1635. At his funeral all the little community, Jesuits, officers, soldiers, traders, and settlers, gathered to pay honor to the dead "Father of New France."

He was a great soul, his faults chiefly those of a too confiding nature, always manly and sincere, a brave soldier and a true gentleman, unselfishly devoted to the work to which he had consecrated his life, and on the rude frontiers of the New World living in a spirit worthy of the best ages of chivalry.

The Father of New France is worthily commemorated by a noble monument erected in 1898 and unveiled in the presence of distinguished

representatives of Canada, Great Britain, France, and the United States. It stands within the area once covered by Champlain's fort and presents the hero holding in his hand the King's open commission, while with bared head he salutes the child of his hopes, New France.

# Chapter X

## JESUIT MISSIONARY PIONEERS

# Chapter X

## JESUIT MISSIONARY PIONEERS

**Unselfishness of the Better Class of Jesuits. — Their Achievements in Exploration. — The Great Political Scheme of which they were the Instruments. — Indian Superstitions. — Danger! — The Touching Story of Isaac Jogues. — Ferocity of the Five Nations. — Ruin of the Hurons and of the Jesuit Missions among them.**

A CLASS of men whose aims were singularly unselfish were the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church, mostly Jesuits, that is, members of the Society of Jesus. The first object of the best of them was to convert the Indians and establish a great branch of the Catholic Church in the wilds of America. There were others, however, whose first aim was to increase the power of France. These politician-priests were well represented by the famous Father Allouez who, while he preached the gospel to the Indians, took still greater pains to preach the glory of the French King, whose subjects he wished to make them. On one occasion, supported by a French officer and his sol-

diers, drawn up under arms, he thus addressed a large assemblage of Indians gathered at Sault Ste. Marie:

"When our King attacks his enemies, he is more terrible than the thunder: the earth trembles; the air and the sea are all on fire with the blaze of his cannon; he is seen in the midst of his warriors, covered over with the blood of his enemies, whom he kills in such numbers that he does not count them by the scalps, but by the streams of blood which he causes to flow. In each city he has storehouses where there are hatchets enough to cut down all your forests, kettles enough to cook all your moose, and beds enough to fill all your lodges. His house is higher than the tallest of your trees and holds more families than the largest of your towns. Men come from every quarter of the earth to listen to and admire him. All that is done in the world is decided by him alone."

But we are not now concerned with such scheming priests. We wish to sketch very briefly the story of some of those faithful and single-hearted men who were true missionaries of religion. In their journeys into the wilds they often proved themselves pathfinders, penetrating

regions never before trodden by the foot of a white man. Many a tribe got its first impression of our race from these peaceful preachers. A mission priest, Le Caron, was the first white man who saw Lake Huron. Another, the heroic Jogues, was the first of our race to see Lake George. Thus the work of Catholic missionaries must have a large place in any truthful account of early New France. In fact, the history of Canada is for a long time the history of Jesuit activity.

These men were in the habit of sending to their superiors in the Old World copious accounts of all that they saw or did. These reports, which are known as the "Jesuit Relations," form a perfect storehouse of information about early Canadian affairs and about the Indians with whom the French were in contact.

These Jesuit priests commonly were highly educated men, accustomed to all the refinements of life — some of them of noble families — and we can only measure their devotion to the cause of religion when we realize the contrast between their native surroundings and the repulsive savagery into which they plunged when they went among the Indians. Think of such a man as

Father Le Jeune, cultivated and high-minded, exiling himself from his white brethren for a whole season, which he spent with a band of Algonquins, roaming the wintry forests with them, sharing their hunger and cold and filth, sometimes on the verge of perishing from sheer starvation, at other times, when game chanced to be plentiful, revolted by the gorging of his companions, at all times disgusted by their nastiness. "I told them again and again," he writes, "that if dogs and swine could talk, they would use just such speech;" a remark which shows, by the way, that the good friar did not think so highly of dumb animals as we do in these more enlightened days.

But he had abundant charity, and he noted that underneath all this coarse rudeness there was genuine fellowship among these savages; that they cheerfully helped one another, and when food was scarce, fairly distributed the smallest portion among all. Such observations helped him to endure his lot with serenity, even when he was himself made the butt of the coarsest jokes. He survived his hard experiences and, after five months of roaming, exhausted and worn to a shadow, rejoined the brethren in the rude convent at Quebec.

There was much of this fine spirit about the best of the Jesuits. But, besides this individual devotion, there was another important circumstance: they were only private soldiers in a great army. They had no will of their own, for one of the first principles of the Order was absolute obedience. Wherever their superiors might send them they must go without a question. Whatever they might be ordered to do, they must do it without a murmur.

It became the policy of the leading men of the Order in Canada to establish missionary posts among the Hurons who, living in fixed habitations, were more hopeful subjects than the roving Algonquins of the St. Lawrence region. It would be a great gain, they reasoned, if these people could be brought within the pale of the Church. At the same time that so many souls would be saved from everlasting flames, the immensely lucrative fur-trade of a vast region would be secured to the French, and the King would gain thousands of dusky subjects. Canada would flourish, the fur-traders would grow richer than ever, and France would be in the way of extending her rule ever further and further over the western forests and waters — all through the

exertions of a few faithful and single-hearted men who went to preach religion.

The three men chosen for the work among the Hurons were Fathers Brébeuf, Daniel, and Davost. On their journey to their post, if they could have followed a direct line, they would have gone up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, traversed the length of the lake, and then by a short overland journey reached their destination. But this route would have exposed them to the ferocious Iroquois, whose country bordered Lake Ontario on the south. Therefore, it was necessary to take the long and circuitous canoe-voyage which Champlain had taken fifteen years earlier (*See map*).

At last, after many pains and perils, half-dead with hunger and fatigue, they reached a village of the Huron country. Soon they settled down to the routine of their daily life, of which they have left us a very readable account. Every day they had numerous visitors, some from long distances, who came to gaze in silent wonder at their domestic arrangements. For instance, there was the clock. They squatted on the floor for hours, watching it and waiting to hear it strike. They thought it was alive and asked what it ate.

They listened in awe when it struck, sure that they heard the voice of a living being. "The Captain" they called it.

Sometimes one of the French soldiers who accompanied the Jesuits, when "the Captain" had sounded his last stroke, would cry out, "Stop!" Its immediate silence proved that it heard and obeyed.

"What does the Captain say?" the Indians sometimes asked.

"When he strikes twelve times, he says, 'Hang on the kettle,' and when he strikes four times, he says, 'Get up and go home.'"

This was a particularly happy thought; at the stroke of four their visitors would invariably rise and take themselves off.

In spite of the lack of outward signs of success, the good men were making a conquest of the savage people's hearts. Their unwearied patience, their kindness, the innocence of their lives, and the tact with which they avoided every occasion of ill-will, did not fail to gain the confidence of those whom they sought to win, and chiefs of distant villages came to urge that they would take up their abode with them. Soon the Huron country contained no less than

six different points where faithful priests preached the gospel.

The Fathers had abundant opportunities of observing the habits of the natives. They have left a most interesting description of the great Feast of the Dead, which was held at intervals of ten or twelve years, and the object of which was to gather into one great burying-place all the dead of the tribe, these being removed from their temporary resting-places on scaffolds and in graves. It was believed that the souls of the dead remained with their bodies until the great common burial, then they would depart to the spirit-world.[1]

This practice, of a great common burial, explains the occurrence, in various parts of the country once occupied by the Hurons, of pits

[1] The faith of the Indians in a future life was very sincere and strong. Jonathan Carver tells a touching story of a couple whom he knew who lost a little son of about four years. They seemed inconsolable. After a time the father died. Then the mother dried her tears and ceased her lamentations. When he asked her the reason of this, as it seemed to him, strange conduct, she answered that she and her husband had grieved excessively, because they knew that their little boy would be alone in the other world, without anybody to provide for his wants, but now, his father having gone to join him, her mind was at rest in the assurance that the little fellow would be well cared for and happy.

containing the remains of many hundreds of persons all mixed together promiscuously, together with belts of wampum, copper ornaments, glass beads, and other articles. One of these deposits is said to have contained the remains of several thousand persons.[1]

The story of Isaac Jogues is a good example both of the Jesuit missionaries' sufferings and of their fortitude. He had gone to Quebec for supplies and was returning to the Huron country with two young Frenchmen, Goupil and Couture, and a number of Hurons. Suddenly the war-whoop rang in their ears, and a fleet of Iroquois canoes bore down upon them from adjacent islands, with a terrific discharge of musketry. The Hurons for the greater part leaped ashore and fled. Jogues sprang into the bulrushes and could have got away. When he saw some of the converted Indians in the hands of their enemies, he determined to share their fate, came out from his hiding-place, and gave himself up. Goupil

[1] This usage seems to have been quite general. Jonathan Carver, in 1767, tells of a common burying-place of several bands of the Sioux, to which these roving people carefully brought their dead at a given time, depositing them with great solemnity. These bodies had previously been temporarily placed on rude scaffolds on the limbs of trees, awaiting the general interment.

was taken prisoner. Couture had got away, but the thought of the fate that probably awaited Jogues decided him to go back and cast in his lot with him. In the affray, however, he had killed an Iroquois. In revenge, the others fell upon him furiously, stripped off all his clothing, tore away his finger-nails with their teeth, gnawed his fingers, and thrust a sword through one of his hands. Jogues broke from his guards, ran to his friend, and threw his arms about his neck. This so incensed the Iroquois that they turned upon him, beat him with their fists and war-clubs till he was senseless, and gnawed his fingers as they had done Couture's. Goupil next received the same ferocious treatment.

The victorious Iroquois now started off with their captives for their country. Their route lay up the river Richelieu, through the length of Lake Champlain, and through the greater part of Lake George to a point where they were wont to leave it and cross over to the Hudson. There was picturesque scenery by the way. But what charm had the beauties of Lake Champlain and distant glimpses of the Adirondacks for the poor prisoners, harassed by the pain and fever of their wounds, in the day cruelly beaten by their captors and at

night so tormented by clouds of mosquitoes that they could not sleep? In time they passed the sites of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, sighted romantic Lake George, which these three lonely white men were the first of their race to see, and landed from their canoes at the place where afterward rose Fort William Henry, the scene of one of the most shocking tragedies of the Colonial Wars.

Thirteen dreadful days the journey occupied, from the St. Lawrence to its termination at a palisaded town on the banks of the Mohawk. On Lake Champlain they had met a war-party of Iroquois, and the prisoners, for their delight, had been compelled to run the gauntlet between a double line of braves armed with clubs and thorny sticks. When Jogues fell drenched in blood and half-dead, he was recalled to consciousness by fire applied to his body. Couture's experience illustrates a singular trait of the ferocious Iroquois. There was nothing that they admired so much as bulldog courage; and though he had exasperated them by killing one of their warriors, they punished him only by subjecting him to excruciating tortures. His fortitude under these still further increased their admiration and they ended by adopting him

into the tribe. Many years later we read of him still living among the Mohawks. Jogues and Goupil they dragged from town to town, in each place exposing them on a scaffold and subjecting them to atrocities contrived to cause the utmost suffering without endangering life. Yet, in an interval between tortures, Jogues seized an opportunity to baptize some Huron prisoners with a few rain-drops gathered from the husks of an ear of green corn thrown to him for food.

Three of the Hurons were burned to death, and the two Frenchmen expected the same fate. Goupil did indeed meet with his death, but in a different way. He was once seen to make the sign of the cross on the forehead of a grandchild of the Indian in whose lodge he lived. The old man's superstition was aroused, having been told by the Dutch that the sign of the cross came from the Devil. So he imagined that Goupil had bewitched the child.

The next morning, as the two Frenchmen were walking together, talking of the glory of suffering for the sake of Christ, they met two young Indians, one of whom buried his hatchet in Goupil's head. Jogues gave absolution to his dying friend and then, kneeling calmly, bowed his neck to the blow

which he expected. Instead, he was ordered to get up and go home.

For a time his life hung on a thread. He would have welcomed death. But the very indifference to it which he showed was probably the reason why the Iroquois spared him. Now he led an existence of horrible drudgery. After a while, as he showed no disposition to escape, he was allowed to come and go as he pleased. So he went from town to town, teaching and baptizing whenever he could get a chance. The gangs of prisoners whom the Iroquois brought home from the Huron country, and whom they almost invariably burned, furnished him an abundance of subjects to work on.

Once it happened that he went with a party of Indians to a fishing-place on the Hudson. Thence some of them went up the river to Fort Orange, a miserable structure of logs, standing within the limits of the present city of Albany. The Dutch settlers there had heard of Jogues's captivity and, strenuous Protestants though they were, had striven to secure his release by offering goods to a large value. Now that he was among them, they urged him not to return to his captors, but to make his escape, since his death was certain, if he went back. They offered to smuggle him

on board a vessel that lay in the river and pay his way to France. He resolved to seize the tempting opportunity.

It would make our story too long if we should tell at length the narrow escapes that he still experienced before he succeeded in getting away. At his first attempt to slip away at night, he was severely bitten by a savage dog belonging to the Dutch farmer with whom he and the Indians lodged. When he got off he lay two days hidden in the hold of the vessel that was to carry him away. Then the Indians came out and so frightened its officers that he was sent ashore and put under the care of a miserly old fellow who ate the most of the food that was provided for Jogues. While he was hidden in this man's garret he was within a few feet of Indians who came there to trade. Finally the Dutch satisfied the Indians by paying a large ransom and shipped Jogues down the river. He received nothing but kindness from the Dutch everywhere and, on his arrival at Manhattan (New York), was furnished by the Governor with a suit of clothes, instead of his tattered skins, and given a passage to Europe.

At last he landed on the coast of Brittany. In due time he reached Paris, and the city was stirred

with the tale of his sufferings and adventures. He was summoned to court, and the ladies thronged about him to do him reverence, while the Queen kissed his mutilated hands.

Would not one think that Jogues had had enough of the New World, with its deadly perils and cruel pains? But so it was not. His simple nature cared nothing for honors. His heart was over the water, among the savages whom he longed to save. Besides, he was only a private soldier in that great army, the Jesuit brotherhood, of which every member was sworn to act, to think, to live, for but one object, the advancement of religion as it was represented by the Order. And who was so fit for the work among the Indians as Jogues, who knew their language and customs?

So, in the following spring we find him again on the Atlantic, bound for Canada. Two years he passed in peaceful labors at Montreal. Then his supreme trial came. Peace had been made between the French and the Mohawks, and Couture still lived among the latter, for the express purpose of holding them steadfast to their promises. But, for some reason, the French apprehended an outbreak of hostilities, and it was

resolved to send envoys to the Indian country. At the first mention of the subject to Jogues he shrank from returning to the scene of so much suffering. But the habit of implicit obedience triumphed, and he quickly announced his willingness to do the will of his superiors, which to him was the will of God. "I shall go, but I shall never return," he wrote to a friend.

He started out with a small party carrying a load of gifts intended to conciliate the Iroquois, and followed the route that was associated in his mind with so much misery, up the Richelieu and Lake Champlain and through Lake George. At the head of this water they crossed over to the Hudson, borrowed canoes from some Indians fishing there, and dropped down the river to Fort Orange. Once more Jogues was among his Dutch friends. Glad as they were to see him, they wondered at his venturing back among the people who had once hunted him like a noxious beast. From Fort Orange he ascended the Mohawk River to the first Indian town. With what wonder the savages must have gazed at the man who had lived among them as a despised slave, and now had come back laden with gifts as the ambassador of a great power! They received

him graciously, and when his errand was done, he returned safe to Quebec.

It would have been well for him if his superiors had contented themselves with what he had already done and suffered. But they had a grand scheme of founding a mission among the Iroquois. They knew its perils and called it "The Mission of Martyrs." To this post of danger Jogues was sent. The devoted man went without a murmur. On the way he met Indians who warned him of danger, and his Huron companions turned back, but he went on. Arrived among the Mohawks, he found a strong tide of feeling running against him. The accident that aroused it illustrates Indian superstitiousness. On his former visit, expecting to return, he had left a small box. From the first the Indians suspected it of being, like Pandora's box in the old mythology, full of all kinds of ills. But Jogues opened it and showed them that it contained only some harmless personal effects. After he was gone, however, some Huron prisoners wrought on their terror and at the same time reviled the French, declaring that the latter had almost ruined the Huron nation by their witchcraft and had brought on it drought, plague, pestilence, and famine.

The Iroquois were well-nigh wild with rage and fright. At any moment the small-pox or some other horror might step out of the little box and stalk abroad among them. The three clans that made up the tribe were divided. The clans of the Wolf and the Tortoise were for keeping the peace; but the clan of the Bear was for making war on the French. Just then, by ill fortune, Jogues, approaching the Mohawk villages, encountered a band of Bear warriors. They seized and dragged him to their town. Here he was savagely attacked and beaten with fists and clubs. In vain he reminded them that he had come on an errand of peace. They tortured him cruelly. The Wolf and Tortoise clans protested against this violation of the peace, but the others carried everything before them.

The next day Jogues was bidden to a feast. He did not dare refuse to go. As he entered the lodge of the Bear chief, in spite of the efforts of an Indian who exposed his own life in trying to save him, a hatchet was buried in his brain. Thus died a singularly pure and unselfish man, a Pathfinder, too, for he was one of the three white men who first saw Lake George.

Shortly after the death of Jogues, war broke

out again. Nothing could have exceeded the ferocity of the Five Nations. They boasted that they intended to sweep the French and their Indian friends off the face of the earth. No place seemed too remote for them. At the most unexpected moments of the day or the night they rose, as it seemed, out of the earth, and, with their blood-curdling war-whoop, fell upon their intended victims with guns and tomahawks. The poor Algonquins were in a state of pitiable terror. Nowhere were they safe. Even when they retired into the wilderness north of the St. Lawrence, they were tracked by their ruthless foes, slaughtered, burned, and drowned.

We might go on and tell the story of other priests who all fell at the post of duty and died worthily. But of what use would it be to prolong these horrors? Enough to say that the Huron nation was almost annihilated, the feeble remnant left their country and went elsewhere, and the once promising work of the Jesuits among them ended in fire and blood.

A small party of the Hurons accompanied the returning priests to the French settlements and became established, under French protection, near Quebec, at a place called New Lorette, or Indian

Lorette, and fought by the side of their white friends in later wars. There, to this day, their descendants, mostly French half-breeds, may be seen engaged in the harmless occupations of weaving baskets and making moccasins. Another band wandered away to the far Northwest, came into conflict with the warlike and powerful Sioux, and, driven back eastward, finally took up its abode near the sites of Detroit and Sandusky. Under the name of Wyandots, its descendants played a conspicuous part in our border wars.

# Chapter XI

## JEAN NICOLLET, LOUIS JOLIET, AND FATHER JACQUES MARQUETTE

### THE DISCOVERERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI

# Chapter XI

## JEAN NICOLLET, LOUIS JOLIET, AND FATHER JACQUES MARQUETTE

### THE DISCOVERERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI

**Jean Nicollet's Voyage on the Wisconsin. — Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette are sent by Count Frontenac to follow the Course of the Mississippi. — On the Wisconsin. — The "Great Water" reached. — Hospitably entertained in an Indian Camp. — An Invaluable Gift. — The Mouth of the Missouri and the Mouth of the Ohio passed. — The Outlet of the Arkansas reached. — Hardships of the Return Voyage. — Death of Marquette. — Joliet's Mishap.**

A NOTABLE *coureur de bois* (a French-Canadian wood-ranger) was Jean Nicollet. He had lived for years among the savages and had become thoroughly Indian in his habits. He was sent by the French Governor, about 1638, as an ambassador to the Winnebagoes, west of Lake Michigan. He had heard among his Indian friends of a strange people without hair or beard who came from beyond the Great Water to trade with the Indians on the Lakes. Who could these beardless men be but Chinese or Japanese?

So fully possessed was he by this idea that, in order to make a suitable appearance before the Orientals whom he expected to meet, he took along with him a robe of heavy Chinese silk, embroidered with birds and flowers. When he neared the Winnebago town, he sent a messenger ahead to announce his coming, and, having put on his gorgeous robe, followed him on the scene. Never did a circus, making its grand entry into a village in all the glory of gilded chariots and brass band, inspire deeper awe than this primitive ambassador, with his flaming robe and a pair of pistols which he fired continually. His pale face, the first that the Winnebagoes had ever seen, gave them a sense of something unearthly. The squaws and the children fled into the woods, shrieking that it was a manitou (spirit) armed with thunder and lightning. The warriors, however, stood their ground bravely and entertained him with a feast of one hundred and twenty beaver.[1]

But if Nicollet did not succeed in opening relations with Cathay and Cipango (China and

[1] These Winnebagoes were the most eastern branch of the great Dakota-Sioux family. Their ancestors were the builders, it is believed, of the Wisconsin mounds.

Japan), he did something else that entitles him to be commemorated among the Pathfinders. He ascended Fox River to its head-waters, crossed the little divide that separates the waters flowing into the Lakes from those that empty into the Gulf of Mexico, and launched his canoe on the Wisconsin, the first white man, so far as we know, who floated on one of the upper tributaries of the mighty river. This was just about one hundred years after Soto had crossed it in its lower course. On his return, he reported that he had followed the river until he came within three days of the sea. Undoubtedly he misunderstood his Indian guides. The "Great Water" of which they spoke was almost certainly the Mississippi, for that is what the name means.

The first undoubted exploration of the mighty river took place thirty-five years later. It was made by two men who combined the two aspects of Jesuit activity, the spiritual and the worldly. Louis Joliet was born in Canada, of French parents. He was educated by the Jesuits, and was all his life devoted to them. He was an intelligent merchant, practical and courageous. No better man could have been chosen for the work assigned him.

His companion in this undertaking was a Jesuit priest, Jacques Marquette, who was a fine example of the noblest qualities ever exhibited by his order. He was settled as a missionary at Michillimackinac, on Mackinaw Strait, when Joliet came to him from Quebec with orders from Count Frontenac to go with him to seek and explore the Mississippi.

On May 17, 1673, in very simple fashion, in two birch-bark canoes, with five white *voyageurs* and a moderate supply of smoked meat and Indian corn, the two travelers set out to solve a perplexing problem, by tracing the course of the great river. Their only guide was a crude map based on scraps of information which they had gathered. Besides Marquette's journal, by a happy chance we have that of Jonathan Carver, who traveled over the same route nearly a hundred years later. From him we get much useful and interesting information.

At the first, the explorers' course lay westward, along the northern shore of Lake Michigan and into Green Bay. The Menomonie, or Wild-rice Indians, one of the western branches of the Algonquin family, wished to dissuade them from going further. They told of ferocious tribes,

who would put them to death without provocation, and of frightful monsters (alligators) which would devour them and their canoes. The voyagers thanked them and pushed on, up Fox River and across Lake Winnebago.

At the approach to the lake are the Winnebago Rapids, which necessitate a portage, or "carry." Our voyagers do not mention having any trouble here. But, at a later time, according to a tradition related by Dr. R. G. Thwaites, this was the scene of a tragic affair. When the growing fur-trade made this route very important, the Fox Indians living here made a good thing out of carrying goods over the trail and helping the empty boats over the rapids. They eventually became obnoxious by taking toll from passing traders. Thereupon the Governor of New France sent a certain Captain Marin to chastise them. He came up the Fox River with a large party of *voyageurs* and half-breeds on snow-shoes, surprised the natives in their village, and slaughtered them by hundreds.

At another time the same man led a summer expedition against the Foxes. He kept his armed men lying down in the boats and covered with oilcloth like goods. Hundreds of red-skins

were squatting on the beach, awaiting the coming of the flotilla. The canoes ranged up along the shore. Then, at a signal, the coverings were thrown off, and a rain of bullets was poured into the defenceless savages, while a swivel-gun mowed down the victims of this brutality. Hundreds were slaughtered, it is said.

On to the lower Fox River their course led the explorers. This brought them into the country of the Miamis, the Mascoutins, once a powerful tribe, now extinct, and the Kickapoos, all Algonquins of the West.

A council was held, and the Indians readily granted their request for guides to show them the way to the Wisconsin. Through the tortuous and blind course of the little river, among lakes and marshes, they would have had great difficulty in making their way unaided.[1]

When they came to the portage, where now stands the city of Portage,[2] with its short canal

[1] Carver says, "It is with difficulty that canoes can pass through the obstructions they meet with from the rice-stalks. This river is the greatest resort for wild fowl that I met with in the whole course of my travels; frequently the sun would be obscured by them for some minutes together."

[2] This spot has a remarkable interest as the place where, within a very short distance, rise the waters that flow away to the eastward,

connecting the two rivers, they carried their canoes across, and launched their little barks on the Wisconsin. Down this river they would float to the great mysterious stream that would carry them they knew not whither, perhaps to the Sea of Virginia (the Atlantic), perhaps to the Gulf of Mexico, perhaps to the Vermilion Sea (the Gulf of California).

Whether they would ever return from the dim, undiscovered country into which they were venturing, who could say? It seems amazing that one hundred and thirty years after Soto had crossed the great river, intelligent Frenchmen were ignorant even of its outlet. It shows how successfully Spain had suppressed knowledge of the territory which she claimed.

Down the quiet waters of the Wisconsin the voyagers glided, passing the thrifty villages of the Sacs and Foxes, then a powerful people, now almost extinct. On June 17, exactly one month from the day of their starting, their canoes

through the Great Lakes, into the North Atlantic, and those that flow southward to the Mississippi and the Gulf. It is, however, according to Carver, most uninviting in appearance, "a morass overgrown with a kind of long grass, the rest of it a plain, with some few oak and pine trees growing thereon. I observed here," he says, "a great number of rattlesnakes."

shot out into a rapid current, here a mile wide, and with joy beyond expression, as Marquette writes, they knew that they had achieved the first part of their undertaking. They had reached the "Great Water."

What would have been the feelings of these unassuming voyagers, if they could have looked down the dim vista of time, and have seen the people of a great and prosperous commonwealth (Wisconsin), on June 17, 1873, celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of their achievement!

Strange sights unfolded themselves, as they made their way down the mighty stream and looked on shores that no eyes of a white man had ever beheld. What magnificent solitudes! Only think of it — more than a fortnight without seeing a human being!

They used always extreme caution, as well they might, in view of the tales that had been told them of ferocious savages roaming that region. They went ashore in the evening, cooked and ate their supper, and then pushed out and anchored in the stream, keeping a man on watch till morning.

After more than two weeks of this solitary voyaging, one day they saw a well-trodden path

that led to the adjacent prairie. Joliet and Marquette determined to follow it, leaving the canoes in charge of their men. After a walk of some miles inland, they came to an Indian village, with two others in sight. They advanced with beating hearts. What was their reception to be? When they were near enough to hear voices in the wigwams, they stood out in the open and shouted to attract attention. A great commotion ensued, and the inmates swarmed out. Then, to their intense relief, four chiefs advanced deliberately, holding aloft two calumets, or peace-pipes. They wore French cloth, from which it was evident that they traded with the French. These people proved to belong to the great Illinois tribe, the very people some of whom had met Marquette at his mission-station and had begged him, as he says, "to bring them the word of God."

Now, after the pipe of peace had been duly smoked, he had the long-desired opportunity of delivering the message of salvation. He did not fail to add some words about the power and glory of Onontio (Count Frontenac). The head chief replied in a flowery speech, after the most approved fashion of Indian oratory, assuring his

guests that their presence made his tobacco sweeter, the river calmer, the sky more serene, and the earth more beautiful. He further showed his friendship by giving them a boy as a slave and, best of all, a calumet, or peace-pipe,[1] which was to serve as a commendation to the good-will of other Indians. Invaluable the voyagers found it.

The friendly chief also represented very strongly the danger of going further down the

[1] The following description of this very important article is taken from Father Hennepin :

"This Calumet is the most mysterious Thing in the World among the Savages of the Continent of the Northern America : for it is used in all their most important Transactions. However, it is nothing else but a large Tobacco-pipe made of Red, Black, or White Marble : The Head is finely polished, and the Quill, which is commonly two Foot and a half long, is made of a pretty strong Reed, or Cane, adorned with Feathers of all Colours, interlaced with Locks of Women's Hair. They tie to it two wings of the most curious Birds they find, which makes their Calumet not unlike Mercury's Wand.

"A Pipe, such as I have described it, is a Pass and Safe Conduct amongst all the Allies of the Nation who has given it ; for the Savages are generally persuaded that a great Misfortune would befal 'em, if they violated the Publick Faith of the Calumet."

The French never wearied of extolling the wonderful influence of this symbol of brotherhood. Says Father Gravier, writing of his voyage down the Mississippi, in 1700 : "No such honor is paid to the crowns and sceptres of kings as they pay to it. It seems to be the God of peace and war, the arbiter of life and death."

Great Water and vainly tried to dissuade them. Feasting followed. After various courses, a dainty dish of boiled dog was served, then one of fat buffalo, much to the Frenchmen's relief. Throughout this entertainment the master of ceremonies fed the guests as if they had been infants, removing fish-bones with his fingers and blowing on hot morsels to cool them, before putting them into their mouths. This was the very pink of Indian courtesy.

The two Frenchmen spent the night with their dusky friends and the next day were escorted to their canoes by several hundreds of them. This first encounter with Indians of the Mississippi Valley on their own soil seems to have taken place not far from the site of Keokuk.

The voyagers' next sensation was experienced after passing the mouth of the Illinois River. Immediately above the site of the city of Alton, the flat face of a high rock was painted, in the highest style of Indian art, with representations of two horrible monsters, to which the natives were wont to make sacrifices as they passed on the river. The sight of them caused in the pious Frenchmen a feeling that they were in the Devil's country, for to Christians of the seventeenth century heathen

gods were not mere creatures of the imagination, but living beings, demons, high captains in Satan's great army.

Soon the voyagers were made to fear for their safety by a mighty torrent of yellow mud surging athwart the blue current of the Mississippi, sweeping down logs and uprooting trees, and dashing their light canoes like leaves on an angry brook. They were passing the mouth of the Missouri. A few days later they crossed the outlet of the Ohio, "Beautiful River," as the Iroquois name means.

All the time it was growing hotter. The picturesque shores of the upper river had given place to dense canebrakes, and swarms of mosquitoes pestered them day and night. Now they had a note of danger in meeting some Indians who evidently were in communication with Europeans, for they had guns and carried their powder in small bottles of thick glass. These Europeans could be none other than the Spaniards to the southward, of whom it behooved the Frenchmen to beware, if they did not wish to pull an oar in a galley or swing a pick in a silver-mine. Still there was a satisfaction in the thought that, having left one civilization thousands of miles behind them,

they had passed through the wilderness to the edge of another. These Indians readily responded to the appeal of the Frenchmen's calumet, invited them ashore, and feasted them.

On toward the ocean, which they were falsely told was distant only ten days' journey, the voyagers sped, passing the point at which, one hundred and thirty-three years earlier, Soto, with the remnant of his army, had crossed the mighty river in whose bed his bones were destined to rest. Above the mouth of the Arkansas they were for a time in deadly peril from Indians. These were of the Mitchigamea tribe, who, with the Chickasaws and others of the Muskoki family, fought the Spaniards so valiantly. Canoes were putting out above and below, to cut off the explorers' retreat, while some young warriors on the shore were hastily stringing their bows, all animated doubtless by bitter memories of white men inherited from Soto's time. Once more the calumet saved its bearers. Marquette all the while held it aloft, and some of the elders, responding to its silent appeal, succeeded in restraining the fiery young men. The strangers were invited ashore, feasted, as usual, and entertained over night. They had some misgivings, but did not

dare refuse these hospitalities; and no harm befell them.

The next stage of their journey brought them to a village just opposite the mouth of the Arkansas River. Here they were received in great state by the Arkansas Indians, notice of their coming having been sent ahead by their new friends. There was the usual speechmaking, accompanied by interminable feasting, in which a roasted dog held the place of honor. There was a young Indian who spoke Illinois well, and through him Marquette was able to preach, as well as to gain information about the river below. He was told that the shores were infested by fierce savages armed with guns.

By this time it was evident that nothing was to be gained by going further. The explorers had ascertained beyond dispute that the Mississippi emptied its waters, not directly into the Atlantic, or into the Pacific, but into the Gulf of Mexico. If they went further, they ran the risk of being killed by Indians or falling into the hands of Spaniards. In either case the result of their discovery would be lost. Therefore they resolved to return to Canada. Just two months from their starting and one month from their

discovery of the Great Water they began their return.

Their route was a different one from the original, for on reaching the mouth of the Illinois River they entered and ascended it. On the way, they stopped at a famous village of the Illinois tribe called Kaskaskia. Thence they were guided by a band of young warriors through the route up the Des Plaines River and across the portage to Lake Michigan. Coasting its shore, they reached Green Bay, after an absence of four months.

Thus ended a memorable voyage. The travelers had paddled their canoes more than two thousand, five hundred miles, had explored two of the three routes leading into the Mississippi, and had followed the Great Water itself to within seven hundred miles of the ocean. They had settled one of the knotty geographical points of their day, that of the river's outlet. All this they had done in hourly peril of their lives. Though they experienced no actual violence, there was no time at which they were not in danger.

In the end the voyage cost Marquette his life, for its hardships and exposures planted in his system the germs of a disease from which he

never fully recovered, and from which he died, two years later, on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Joliet met with a peculiar misfortune. At the Lachine Rapids, just above Montreal, almost at the very end of his voyage of thousands of miles, his canoe was upset, two men and his little Indian boy were drowned, and his box of papers, including his precious journal, was lost. Undoubtedly his daily record of the voyage would have been very valuable, for he was a man of scholarship as well as of practical ability. But its accidental loss gave the greater fame to Marquette, whose account was printed. In recent years, however, he has been recognized as an equal partner with the noble priest in the great achievement.

# Chapter XII

## PIERRE ESPRIT RADISSON AND MÉDARD CHOUART DISCOVER LAKE SUPERIOR

# Chapter XII

## PIERRE ESPRIT RADISSON AND MÉDARD CHOUART EXPLORE LAKE SUPERIOR

**Who were the Coureurs de bois. — Radisson's Experiences as a Prisoner among the Iroquois. — He plays the Indian Warrior. — Escapes to the Dutch. — Makes his Way back to Canada. — He and his Brother-in-law set out for the Upper Lakes. — Fight with Iroquois. — Storm an Indian Fort. — Reach Lake Superior. — "The Pictured Rocks." — Keweenaw Point. — Long Overland Journey. — Summer and Feasting. — Winter and Famine. — Feasting again. — Fine Ducking. — Start for Home. — Reach Montreal with Great Fleet of Canoes.**

THE early history of New France owes its romantic interest to the activity of four classes of men. Daring explorers, such as Cartier, Champlain, Joliet, Marquette, La Salle, plunged into the wilderness, penetrated remote regions, made great discoveries, and extended French influence and French trade as far to the west as the Mississippi and to the northeast as far as Hudson Bay. French Catholic missionaries said mass and preached their

faith in the heart of the forest primeval and at lonely posts on the shores of the Great Lakes. Able and brilliant Governors, such as Champlain and Frontenac, built forts at commanding points on the inland waters, and ruled, in a fashion, an area vastly greater than that of France itself.

Of these three classes of men and their achievements we have had examples. We come now to speak of a fourth class who exercised a powerful influence on the destinies of New France. If we remember that the material object of French activity in America was *furs*, we shall easily understand that the men who were busied in the fur-trade were a very important part of the scanty population. They were of two kinds. There were merchants who "kept store" at Quebec, Montreal, Three Rivers, and other trading-posts, bartering their goods to the Indians for peltries. These were brought to them in large quantities in the early summer, when the ice had broken up, and fleets of canoes descended the St. Lawrence laden with skins. Then there was amazing stir at the sleepy little posts on the great river. Painted savages, howling and screeching, mostly half-drunk, swarmed about the stations, and at night the sky was red with the glare of their

fires. There was an enormous profit in the traffic, for the Indians had no idea of the cheapness of the goods which they took in exchange for their furs, nor of the high prices which these brought in Europe. It is no wonder that governors and other high officials were charged with having a secret interest in this very lucrative trade, and, for that reason, winking at violations of the King's orders regulating it. Even Jesuit missionaries sometimes were thought by their opponents to be more eager to share this money-making traffic than to win souls.

But a more numerous class than these stationary traders were the so-called *coureurs de bois*, or wood-rangers. These were wild fellows whom the love of adventure lured into the wilderness not less strongly than the love of gain. They roamed the forests, paddled the streams and lakes, hunted and trapped, trafficked with the Indians wherever and whenever they pleased, often in violation of express orders, and smuggled their forbidden furs into the trading-posts. Sometimes they spent whole seasons, even years, among the savages, taking to wife red women. Lawless fellows as these were, they helped mightily to extend French influence and subdue the continent

to the white man's rule. Daring explorers, they penetrated remote regions, hobnobbed with the natives, and brought back accounts of what they had seen.

One of their leaders, Daniel Greysolon du Lhut, whose name is borne by the city of Duluth, in Minnesota, was a conspicuous figure in the wild frontier life. He carried on a vast fur-trade, held his rough followers well in hand, led a small army of them in fighting the battles of his country, and even appeared at the French court at Versailles.

The half-breed children of these *coureurs*, growing up in Indian wigwams, but full of pride in their French blood, became a strong link binding together the two races in friendly alliance and deciding the Indians, in time of war, to paint themselves and put on their feathers for the French rather than for the English. Therefore any account of pioneer Frenchmen should include a sketch of the *coureurs de bois*.

To illustrate this type, one is here taken as an example who was born in France, and who was a gentleman by birth and education, but whose insatiable love of adventure led him to take up the *coureur's* life, with all its vicissitudes. Withal, he

was a man of note in his day, played no inconsiderable part in opening up the wilderness, and suggested the formation of that vast monoply, the Hudson Bay Fur Company. His journals, after lying for more than two hundred years in manuscript, have been published and have proved very interesting. They give such an inside picture of savage life, with its nastiness, its alternate gluttony and starving, and its ferocity, as it would be hard to find elsewhere, drawn in such English as the wildest humorist would not dream of inventing.

Pierre Esprit Radisson was born at St. Malo, in France, and came to Canada in May, 1651. His home was at Three Rivers, where his relatives were settled. One day he went out gunning with two friends. They were warned by a man whom they met that hostile Indians were lurking in the neighborhood. Still they went on, forgetting their danger in the enjoyment of shooting ducks. Finally, however, one of the party said he would not go further, and the other joined him. This led Radisson to banter them, saying that he would go ahead and kill game enough for all.

On he went, shooting again and again, until

he had more geese and ducks than he could carry home. Finally, after hiding some of his game in a hollow tree, he started back. When he came near the place where he had left his companions, imagine his horror at finding their bodies, "one being shott through with three boulletts and two blowes of an hatchett on the head, and the other run through in several places with a sword and smitten with an hatchett."

Suddenly he was surrounded by Indians who rose, as it were, out of the ground and rushed upon him, yelling like fiends. He fired his gun, wounding two with the duck-shot, and his pistol, without hurting any one. The next moment he found himself thrown on the ground and disarmed, without a single blow.

His courage had impressed the Indians so favorably that they treated him very kindly. When they pitched their camp, they offered him some of their meat, which smelt so horribly that he could not touch it. Seeing this, they cooked a special dish for him. He says it was a nasty mess, but, to show his appreciation, he swallowed some of it. This pleased his captors, and they further showed their good-will by untying him and letting him lie down comfortably

between two of them, covered with a red coverlet through which he "might have counted the starrs."

The Indians traveled homeward in very leisurely fashion, stopping by the way for days at a time and making merry with Radisson, to whom they evidently had taken a strong liking. When they tried to teach him to sing, and he turned the tables by singing to them in French, they were delighted. "Often," he says, "have I sunged in French, to which they gave eares with a deepe silence." They were bent on making a thorough savage of him. So they trimmed his hair after their most approved fashion and plastered it with grease.

He pleased his captors greatly by his good humor and his taking part in chopping wood, paddling, or whatever might be doing, and chiefly by his not making any attempt to escape. In truth, he simply was afraid of being caught and dealt with more severely.

They were traveling the familiar route to the Iroquois country, and in time they came to a fishing-station, the occupants of which greeted the returning warriors uproariously. One of them struck Radisson, who, at a sign from his "keeper," clinched with him. The two fought

furiously, wrestling and "clawing one another with hands, tooth, and nails." The Frenchman was delighted that his captors encouraged him as much as their fellow tribesman. He came off best, and they seemed mightily pleased.

The two men whom he had wounded at the time of his capture, far from resenting it, showed him "as much charity as a Christian might have given."

Still things looked squally for Radisson, when he entered the native village of the party and saw men, women, and boys drawn up in a double row, armed with rods and sticks, evidently for the savage ordeal of running the gauntlet. He was on the point of starting, resolved to run his swiftest, when an old woman took him by the hand, led him away to her cabin, and set food before him. How different from being tortured and burned, which was the fate that he expected! When some of the warriors came and took him away to the council-fire, she followed and pleaded so successfully that he was given up to her, to be her adopted son, in the place of one who had been killed.

Now nothing was too good for Radisson. The poor old woman had taken him to her heart, and

she lavished kindness on him. Her daughters treated him as a brother, and her husband, a famous old warrior, gave a feast in his honor, presenting him to the company under the name of Orinha, which was that of his son who had been killed. He enjoyed the savage life for a time, having "all the pleasures imaginable," such as shooting partridges and "squerells."

But he soon grew home-sick and eager for an opportunity to escape. One offered itself unexpectedly. He had gone off on a hunt of several days with three Indians who invited him to join them. On the second day out, they picked up a man who was alone and invited him to go with them to their camp, which he gladly did. Imagine Radisson's surprise when this man, while the others were getting supper ready, spoke to him in Algonquin, that is, the language of the people who were allies of the French and mortal enemies of the Iroquois. Evidently he was a prisoner who had been spared and given his liberty.

"Do you love the French?" he asked in a low tone.

"Do you love the Algonquins?" Radisson returned.

"Indeed I do love my own people," he re-

plied. "Why, then, do we live among these people? Let us kill these three fellows to-night with their own hatchets. It can easily be done."

Radisson professes to have been greatly shocked. But in the end he fell in with the plan. The two treacherous villains, after eating a hearty supper with their intended victims, lay down beside them and pretended to sleep. When the three Iroquois were deep in slumber, they rose, killed them with tomahawks, loaded the canoe with guns, ammunition, provisions, and the victims' scalps, which the Algonquin had cut off as trophies, and started on the long journey to Three Rivers.

Fourteen nights they had journeyed stealthily, lying in hiding all the day, for fear of meeting Iroquois on the war-path, and had reached a point but a few miles from Three Rivers, when, venturing to cross Lake St. Peter, a wide expansion of the St. Lawrence, by daylight, they encountered a number of hostile canoes. In vain they turned and paddled their hardest for the shore they had left. The enemy gained on them rapidly and opened fire. At the first discharge the Indian was killed and the canoe was so riddled that it was sinking, when the Iroquois ranged alongside and took Radisson out.

Now he was in trouble indeed. No more junketing! No more singing of jolly French songs to amuse his captors, but doleful journeying along with nineteen prisoners, one Frenchman, one Frenchwoman, and seventeen Huron men and women, the latter constantly chanting their mournful death-song.

Through the day the poor wretches lay in the canoes, pinioned and trussed like fowls; and at night they were laid on the ground securely fastened to posts, so that they could not move hand or foot, while mosquitoes and flies swarmed about them. When the Iroquois country was reached, they furnished sport to the whole population, which turned out everywhere to greet them with tortures. This time Radisson did not wholly escape. But when, for the second time, he was on the point of running the gauntlet, for the second time his "mother" rescued him. His "father" lectured him roundly on the folly of running away from people who had made him one of the family. Still he exerted himself strenuously to save Radisson from the death penalty which hung over him, and suceeeded in securing his release after he had been duly tortured.

"Then," he says, "my father goes to seeke

rootes, and my sister chaws them and my mother applyes them to my sores as a plaster." After a month of this primitive surgery, he was able to go about again, free.

The winter passed quietly and pleasantly. Then Radisson, anxious to show himself a thorough Iroquois, proposed to his "father" to let him go on a war-party. The old brave heartily approved, and the young renegade set off with a band for the Huron country.

Now follows a dreary account of the atrocities committed. In the end the party, after perpetrating several murders, encountered a considerable number of the enemy, with the loss of one of their men severely wounded. They burned him, to save him from falling into the enemy's hands, and then fled the country. Their arrival at home, with prisoners and scalps, mostly of women and children, was an occasion of great honor, and Radisson came in for his full share.

Being now allowed greater freedom, he improved it to run away to join the Dutch at Fort Orange (Albany). He tramped all the day and all the night without food, and at daylight found himself near a Dutch settler's cabin. The Dutch treated him with great kindness, gave him clothes and

shoes, and shipped him down the Hudson to "Menada" (Manhattan, New York), whence he sailed for Amsterdam. From that port he took ship for La Rochelle, in France, and thence back to Canada.

To cover a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles, he had been obliged to travel about seven thousand!

Hitherto we have seen Pierre Radisson figure as a mere *coureur de bois*. Now we shall see him in the more important rôle of a discoverer.

Probably he and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart, who styled himself the Sieur des Groseillers, in the course of their long trading journeys among the Indians, in 1658 reached the Mississippi. One important discovery they unquestionably made a few years later. That they were the first white men trading in the Lake Superior region is proved by Radisson's giving the first description of notable objects on the shores of the lake. His account of the memorable experiences of this journey, considerably abridged, fills the remainder of this chapter.

One cannot but wonder that, until a very recent time, the name of this interesting discoverer has not even been mentioned by historical writers.

Here was a man who certainly was of considerable importance in his day, since he was one of two who suggested the formation of the famous Hudson Bay Fur Company, and yet who, until lately, never was spoken of by historians who recorded the achievements of Pathfinders in America. What was the cause of this singular neglect? Chiefly the fact that in his time Canada was full of adventurous *voyageurs*. The fur-trade was the great and only avenue to wealth, and it attracted the most daring spirits. These hardy fellows penetrated the wilderness in all directions, and it was chiefly they who made the northern portion of our country known to white men. Radisson and his brother-in-law, who was his constant companion, belonged to this class. Their journeys were not made for scientific, but for commercial, purposes. They were simply in quest of furs, and whatever discoveries they made were accidental. Thus, little account was made of them at the time.

The chief reason, however, is that the importance of Radisson's journal escaped attention. It was mistaken for a mere record of wanderings. Places not being named — at that time they had no names but the Indian ones — close attention

to the descriptions in the narrative was needed in order to identify them and determine his route. Thus it came to pass that this singularly interesting journal remained unpublished, that is, practically unknown, for more than two hundred years. When, happily, the Prince Society of Boston recognized its value and printed it, in 1885, the writer at once took his rightful place among the Pathfinders.

Radisson and his brother-in-law, in the spring of 1661, applied to the Governor of Canada for permission to go on a trading journey up the lakes. On his refusing, except on the condition of their taking with them two of his servants and giving them half of the profits, they slipped away at midnight without leave, having made an agreement with some Indians, probably Ojibways, of the Sault (Sault Ste. Marie, between Lake Huron and Lake Superior), that these would wait for them at Lake St. Peter, some miles above Three Rivers.

The two parties met, as agreed, and began their long journey. After a few days they found traces of a party that had preceded them, their fires still burning. Judging from certain signs that these were not enemies, they exerted themselves to

overtake them. They found them to be a party of Indians from Lake Superior who had been to Montreal and were returning. The two bands united and now formed a considerable force, in fourteen canoes. This union proved a happy circumstance, for the next day they were attacked by a war-party of Iroquois who were lying in wait for the Lake Superior Indians, having observed their passage down the river. The Iroquois, who had fortified themselves, were evidently surprised to find themselves confronted by a far larger force than they expected.

Radisson and an Indian were sent to scout and examine the fort. They found it to be a stockade surrounded by large rocks. The Iroquois made overtures for peace by throwing strings of wampum over the stockade, and that night they slipped away, leaving a free passage to Radisson's party.

The next day, however, there was a brush with Iroquois, in which three were killed, as well as one of Radisson's party. The enemy were not in sufficient force to make a fight in the open and fell back into an old fort — for this region, being on the route to the upper lakes, was a constant battle-ground. Radisson's party gathered to attack it,

the Iroquois meanwhile firing constantly, but doing little harm. Darkness came on, and the assailants filled a barrel with gunpowder and, "having stoped the whole" (stopped the hole) and tied it to the end of a long pole, tried to push it over the stockade. It fell back, however, and exploded with so much force that three of the assailants themselves were killed.

Radisson then made a sort of hand-grenade by putting three or four pounds of powder into a "rind of a tree" (piece of bark) with "a fusey [fuse] to have time to throw the rind." This he flung into the fort, having directed his Indians to follow up the explosion by breaking in with hatchet and sword. Meanwhile the Iroquois were singing their death-song. The grenade fell among them and burst with terrible execution. Immediately Radisson's party broke in, and there was a scene of confusion, assailants and assailed unable in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe.

Suddenly there fell a tremendous downpour of rain, with pitchy darkness, which seemed so timely for the Iroquois that Radisson remarks, "To my thinking, the Devill himselfe made that storme to give those men leave to escape from our

hands." All sought shelter. When the storm was over the Iroquois had escaped. The victors found "11 of our ennemy slain'd and 2 only of ours, besides seaven wounded." There were also five prisoners secured. The bodies of their own dead were treated with great respect. "We bourned our comrades," says Radisson, "being their custome to reduce such into ashes being slained in batill. It is an honnour to give them such a buriall."

At daybreak the party resumed their journey, rejoicing in "10 heads and foure prisoners, whom we embarqued in hopes to bring them into our country, and there to burne them att our own leasures for the more satisfaction of our wives." Meanwhile they allowed themselves a little foretaste of that delight. "We plagued those infortunate. We plucked oūt their nailes one after another." Probably, when Radisson says "we," he means the Indians only, not his brother and himself.

Traveling on, the party espied a large force of Iroquois hovering near. Anticipating an attack, "we killed our foure prisoners, because they embarrassed us." "If ever blind wished the Light, we wished the obscurity of the night, which no

sooner approached but we embarqued ourselves without any noise and went along." Radisson thinks the Iroquois must have been encumbered with prisoners and booty: else they would not have let his party get away so easily. Fearing, however, to be pursued, these plied their paddles desperately "from friday to tuesday without intermission," their "feete and leggs" all bloody from being cut in dragging the canoes over sharp rocks in the shallows. After this terrible strain, being "quite spent," they were fain to rest, so soon as they felt themselves safe from pursuit.

The party was following Champlain's old route, up the Ottawa River, across country to Lake Nipissing, then down its outlet, French River, to Lake Huron.

After a hard and perilous journey, having "wrought two and twenty dayes and as many nights, having slept not one houre on land all that while," they came out on Lake Huron. Still trouble beset them, in the form of dearth of food. Game was scarce along the shore, and they were glad of such berries as they found. Radisson records that the "wildmen," as he always calls the Indians, showed themselves "far gratfuller then many Christians even to their

owne relations," for whenever they found a good patch of berries they always called him and his brother to get a full share. In due time they reached a strait full of islands (the St. Mary's River), where an abundance of fish relieved their hunger, and came to "a rapid that makes the separation of the lake that we call Superior, or upper" (Sault Ste. Marie).[1]

Some of Radisson's Indian companions were now in their native region. They had promised the two Frenchmen that they "should make good cheare of a fish that they call Assickmack, wch signifieth a white fish," and so it proved.[2]

[1] Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites in his "Father Marquette" quotes the following description, written by a Jesuit missionary about eight years after Radisson's visit: "What is commonly called the Saut is not properly a Saut, or a very high water-fall, but a very violent current of waters from Lake Superior, which, finding themselves checked by a great number of rocks, form a dangerous cascade of half a league in width, all these waters descending and plunging headlong together."

[2] It is interesting to learn that the whitefish, so much prized today, was held in equally high esteem so long ago, and even before the coming of the white men. The same writer quoted above by Dr. Thwaites tells of throngs of Indians coming every summer to the rapids to take these fish, which were particularly abundant there, and describes the method. The fisherman, he says, stands upright in his canoe, and as he sees fish gliding between the rocks, thrusting down a pole on the end of which is a net in the shape of a pocket, sometimes catches six or seven at a haul.

Game, also, was most abundant; and, after their long hardships and privations, the Frenchmen thought this country "like a terrestriall paradise." Having rested and enjoyed the abundance of food for a while, the party went on, "thwarted (crossed) in a pretty broad place and came to an isle most delightfull for the diversity of its fruits." Here they supped and enjoyed themselves until ten o'clock, when, the night being fine, they embarked again and before daylight reached the south shore of the lake. Here Radisson was shown a place where "many peeces of copper weare uncovered." He and his brother were about to take some specimens, when the Indians told them that they would find far larger quantities at a place to which they were going.

The next evidence that we encounter of the accuracy of Radisson's narrative is his description of the hills of shifting sand that form a striking feature of this part of the coast. One of the Indians climbed an especially high one, and, Radisson says, "being there, did shew no more then a crow." These are the sand-hills, which the Indian legend, in Longfellow's "Hiawatha," says were thrown up by Pau-puk-keewis when he blew up a whirlwind. The sight of so much sand reminded Radisson of

" the wildernesses of Turkey land, as the Turques makes their pylgrimages " (the desert of Arabia).

Next the voyagers came to a very " remarquable place, a banke of Rocks that the wildmen made a sacrifice to. They fling much tobacco and other things in its veneration." Radisson thus describes this striking object. " It 's like a great Portall, by reason of the beating of the waves. [He means that the dashing of the water against the mass of rock has worn it away in the shape of an arch.] The lower part of that oppening is as bigg as a tower and grows bigger in the going upp. A shipp of 500 tuns could passe, soe bigg is the arch. I gave it the name of the portall of St. Peter, because my name is so called, and that I was the first Christian that ever saw it." The latter statement seems unquestionably true. But Radisson's name did not stick — unfortunately, for " St. Peter's Portal " would be a better-sounding and more significant name than the meaningless " Pictured Rocks," which is the common designation of this famous object.

This natural arch affords a striking illustration of the wearing effect of water. The waves constantly washing and often beating in fury upon the line of sandstone cliffs has, in the course of ages,

hollowed this arch at the point where the rock was softest. The immense amount of material thus washed from the face of the cliffs has been thrown ashore, blown along the coast, and heaped up in the sand-hills which Radisson describes, and which are reliably reported to vary from one hundred to three hundred feet in height.

A few days later the party came to a place where they made a portage of some miles, in order to save going around a peninsula jutting far out into the lake. "The way was well beaten," says Radisson, "because of the comers and goers, who by making that passage shortens their journey by 8 dayes." From this circumstance it is evident that our travelers were on a frequented route, and that the Indians knew enough of the geography of the country to avoid a canoe journey of several hundreds of miles, by carrying their light craft and their goods across the base of the peninsula, which is here very narrow, being almost cut in two by a chain of lakes and rivers.[1]

[1] The great steamers of to-day follow this route, which the Indian's bark canoe frequented hundreds of years ago. This illustrates the interesting fact that, over all this continent, the Indians were the earliest pathmakers. Important railroads follow the lines of trails made by moccasined feet, and steamboats plough the waters of routes which the birch canoe skimmed for centuries.

Radisson was told that "at the end of the point there is an isle all of copper." This is not very far from the truth, for this peninsula contains, about Keweenaw Point, the richest copper deposit in the world. In 1857 there was taken from one of the mines a mass of ore weighing 420 tons and containing more than ninety per cent of pure copper.

Traveling on, the party met with some Christinos, or Crees, who joined it "in hopes," says Radisson, "to gett knives from us, which they love better then we serve God, which should make us blush for shame." In time they came to "a cape very much elevated like piramides," probably the "Doric Rock." In a certain "channell" they took "sturgeons of a vast bignesse and Pycks of seaven foot long," probably the well-known muscalonge.[1]

Now the long canoe voyage had come to an end, and as the Indians said that five days' journey would be needed to bring them to their homes, and the two white men had heavy packs which they were loth to carry so long a distance, they

[1] Undoubtedly it was one of these "sturgeons of a vast bignesse" that, according to the legend, swallowed both Hiawatha and his canoe. We are now in Hiawatha's country, and we are constantly reminded by Radisson's descriptions of passages in Longfellow's beautiful poem.

decided to remain where they were and let their red friends either come or send back for them. Then, being but two men, surrounded by wild tribes, they built themselves a little triangular log fort by the water-side, with its door opening toward the water. All around it, at a little distance, was stretched a long cord, to which were fastened some small bells, "which weare senteryes" (sentries), Radisson says.[1]

Having thus fortified themselves with a perfect armory within, namely, "5 guns, 2 musquetons, 3 fowling-peeces, 3 paire of great pistoletts, and 2 paire of pocket ons, and every one his sword and daggar," they might feel reasonably safe in a country in which the natives as yet stood in awe of fire-arms. They had some friendly visitors, but would never admit more than one person at a time. Radisson says, in his droll way, "During that time we had severall alarums in ye night. The squerels and other small beasts, as well as foxes, came in and assaulted us." For food there was an abundance of fish and of "bustards" (wild geese), of which Radisson shot a great number.

[1] This little structure has a peculiar interest, because of its being, in all probability, the first habitation of white men on the shores of Lake Superior. It seems to have stood on Chequamegon Bay.

When, after twelve days, some of their traveling companions reappeared, they were astounded at the sight of the fort and complimented the two Frenchmen by calling them "every foot devills to have made such a machine." They had brought a quantity of provisions, imagining the two white men to be famishing. But, lo! here was a supply of game more than sufficient for the whole party. The Indians wondered how it chanced that the Frenchmen's baggage was so greatly reduced. These accounted for it by saying that, fearing lest the sight of so much wealth should lead to their being murdered, they had taken a great part of their merchandise and sunk it in the water, committing it to the care of their "devill," who was charged "not to lett them to be wett nor rusted, wch he promised faithlesse" that he would do; all of which the simple creatures believed "as ye Christians the Gospell." Radisson explains that he and his brother had really buried the goods across the river. "We told them that lye," he says, "that they should not have suspicion of us."

The two white men immensely enjoyed the profound deference paid them. When they started on their journey, "we went away," says Radisson,

" free from any burden, whilst those poor miserables thought themselves happy to carry our Equipage, for the hope that they had that we should give them a brasse ring, or an awle, or an needle."

After traveling four days, our " 2 poore adventurers for the honour of our countrey " were told that they were approaching their destination. Runners went ahead to warn the people of their coming. " Every one prepared to see what they never before have seene," that is, white men.

Their entry into the village was made with due pomp, and they " destinated 3 presents, one for the men, one for the women, other for the children, to the end," says Radisson, " that we should be spoaken of a hundred years after, if other Europeans should not come in those quarters." These gifts having been received with great rejoicing, there followed feasting, powwowing in council, and a scalp-dance, all of which occupied three days and consumed, in good Indian fashion, the provisions which should have helped them to get through the fast approaching winter. Accordingly, we soon read of the horrors of famine, amid the gloomy wintry forests, the trees laden and the ground deeply covered with snow. Radisson gives a moving description of it. " It

grows wors and wors dayly. . . . Every one cryes out for hunger. Children, you must die. ffrench, you called yourselves Gods of the earth, that you should be feered; notwithstanding you shall tast of the bitternesse. . . . In the morning the husband looks upon his wife, the Brother his sister, the cozen the cozen, the Oncle the nevew, that weare for the most part found dead." So for two or three pages he goes on telling of the cruel suffering and of the various substitutes for nourishing food, such as bark ground and boiled; bones that had lain about the camp, picked clean by dogs and crows, now carefully gathered and boiled; then "the skins that weare reserved to make us shoose, cloath, and stokins," and at last even the skins of the tents that covered them.

Radisson and his brother had long since eaten their dogs. About this time "there came 2 men from a strange countrey who had a dogg" the sight of which was very tempting. "That dogge was very leane and as hungry as we weare." Still the sight of him was more than mortal could bear. In vain the two Frenchmen offered an extravagant price for the poor beast; his owners would not part with him. Then they resolved

to "catch him cunningly." So Radisson watches his opportunity, prowling at night near the visitors' cabin, and when the dog comes out, snatches him up, stabs him, and carries him to his party, where he is immediately cut up and "broyled like a pigge." Even the snow soaked with his blood goes into the kettles.

Radisson's description of the horrors of that fearful time will not fail to remind readers of Hiawatha of the poet Longfellow's picture of a famine in the same region in which Radisson was. The main features are the same. There is the bitter cold,

> O the long and dreary winter!
> O the cold and cruel winter!

There is the gloomy, snow-laden forest,

> Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
> Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
> Fell the covering snow, and drifted
> Through the forest, round the village.

There are the pitiful cries of the helpless, starving ones,

> O the wailing of the children!
> O the anguish of the women!

There is the hunter engaged in his bootless quest,

Vainly walked he through the forest,
Sought for bird or beast and found none,
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
In the snow beheld no footprints.

Then came the two dread visitors, Famine and Fever, and fixed their awful gaze on Minnehaha, who

Lay there trembling, freezing, burning
At the looks they cast upon her,
At the fearful words they uttered.

Out into the forest rushes Hiawatha, crying frantically to Heaven,

"Give me food for Minnehaha,
For my dying Minnehaha!"
Through the far-resounding forest,
Through the forest vast and vacant
Rang the cry of desolation,
But there came no other answer
Than the echo of the woodlands,
"Minnehaha! Minnehaha!"

All the day he roamed the gloomy depths of the wintry woods, still vainly seeking food. When he came home empty-handed, heavy-hearted, lo! the spirit of Minnehaha had fled to the Islands of the Blessed. Her body they laid in the snow,

In the forest deep and darksome,
Underneath the moaning hemlocks.

The singularly vivid descriptions of Indian life, with its alternations of human affection and fiendish cruelty, of daring and cowardice, of gorging and starving, make one of the most interesting features of Radisson's book. He lived the life himself and left such a picture of it as few white men could have drawn. Accordingly, he soon tells of feasting once more. What broke the famine was a storm of wind and rain that caused the snow to fall from the trees, cleared the forests, and formed, after a freeze, a crust on the snow that enabled the hunters to kill an abundance of game. Deer, with their sharp hoofs, broke through the crust "after they made 7 or 8 capers" (bounds), and were easily taken. There was other food, too, for there came a deputation of Indians to visit the white strangers, accompanied by their women "loaded of Oates, corne that growes in that country." He means wild rice, which formed the staple food of certain tribes. This was a gift, and at its presentation there were elaborate ceremonies, the account of which fills several pages. Still this was only the beginning, for the appointed time for a grand council was approaching, and soon there arrived deputations from eighteen different tribes, until five hundred

warriors were assembled. More feasting, more ceremonies, more honors to the white visitors, who received more beaver-skins than they could possibly carry away, and pledges of eternal friendship on both sides.

Hardly were these rites ended, when there came fresh troops of savages, and all began over again. "There weare," says Radisson, "playes, mirths, and bataills for sport. In the publick place the women danced with melody. The yong men that indeavoured to gett a pryse [prize] indeavored to clime up a great post, very smooth, and greased with oyle of beare."

Then followed a most interesting exhibition "in similitud of warrs," the young men going through the various motions of attack, retreat, and the like, without a word, all the commands being given by "nodding or gesture," the old men meanwhile beating furiously on drums made of "earthen potts full of water covered with staggs-skin." There followed a dance of women, "very modest, not lifting much their feete from the ground, making a sweet harmony."

Finally, after more feasting, more "renewing of alliances," more exchange of gifts, in which, of course, the Frenchmen received valuable furs in

return for the merest trifles, the great assembly broke up, the red men filed off toward their distant villages, and the honored strangers started on their long homeward journey, with numerous sled-loads of peltry.

All that summer they traveled among the numerous islands on the north shore of the great lake, enjoying an abundance of ducks, fish, and fresh meat. Radisson was amazed at "the great number of ffowles that are so fatt by eating of this graine [wild rice] that heardly they will move from it." He saw "a wildman killing 3 ducks at once with one arrow."

When the final start was made for the French settlements, there were seven hundred Indians in 360 canoes, with a proportionately large quantity of beaver-skins. A stop was made at the River of Sturgeons, to lay in a store of food against the voyage. In a few days over a thousand of these fish were killed and dried.

After they had started again, Radisson came near to parting unwillingly with the splendid fleet of canoes that he was guiding down to the French settlements. One day they espied seven Iroquois. So great was the dread of these formidable savages, that, though these seven took to their heels and

discarded their kettles, even their arms, in their flight, the sight of them threw the hundreds with Radisson into a panic. They were for breaking up and putting off their visit to Montreal for a year. Radisson pleaded hard, and, after twelve days of delay and powwowing, he succeeded in prevailing on all except the Crees to go on with him.

Down the St. Mary's River into Lake Huron the great fleet of canoes went in long procession. Then, the wind being favorable, everybody hoisted some kind of sail, and they were driven along merrily until they came to the portage. This passed, they went on down the Ottawa River without misadventure as far as the long rapids. Then another panic seized the Indian fleet, this time on more reasonable grounds, for the party discovered the evidences of a slaughter of Frenchmen. Seventeen of these, with about seventy Algonquins and Hurons, had laid an ambush here for Iroquois, whom they expected to pass this way. Instead, the biter was bitten. The Iroquois, when they came, numbered many hundreds, and they overwhelmed and, after a desperate resistance, destroyed the little band of Frenchmen, with their allies. The appalling

evidences of this slaughter were terrible proof that the enemy were numerous in that neighborhood. Even Radisson and his brother were alarmed. They had much ado to persuade their Indian friends to go on with them. As last they succeeded and proudly led to Montreal the biggest canoe-fleet that had ever arrived there, "a number of boats that did almost cover ye whole River."

It was a great triumph for the two daring *voyageurs* to bring to market such a volume of trade and many Indians from distant tribes who never before had visited the French.

They expected that this service would be recognized. Instead, the Governor put Groseillers in prison and fined both an enormous sum for going away without his leave. Incensed at this injustice, they determined on going to London and offering their services to the English King. This was the reason of Radisson's translating the notes of his travels into a language that was foreign to him, with such queer results as we have seen in the extracts that have been given.

# Chapter XIII

## ROBERT CAVELIER, SIEUR DE LA SALLE, THE FIRST EXPLORER OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

# Chapter XIII

## ROBERT CAVELIER, SIEUR DE LA SALLE, THE FIRST EXPLORER OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

La Salle's Early Association with the Jesuits. — His Domain in Canada. — He starts on an Exploring Expedition. — Disappears from View. — The Favor of Frontenac. — La Salle's Extraordinary Commission. — Niagara Falls. — The First Vessel ever launched on the Upper Lakes. — Great Hardships of the Journey. — Arrival in the Country of the Illinois. — Fort Crèvecœur built. — Perilous Journey back to Canada. — La Salle starts again for the Illinois Country. — Iroquois Atrocities and Cannibalism. — La Salle goes as far as the Mississippi and returns. — Tonty's Perilous Experiences. — Boisrondet's Ingenuity saves his Life. — La Salle journeys down the Great River. — Interesting Tribes of Indians. — The Ocean! — Louisiana named. — Hardships of the Return Journey. — Fort St. Louis built.

ROBERT CAVELIER, more generally known as La Salle, at the first was connected with the Jesuits, but left the Society of Jesus and, at the youthful age of twenty-three, came to Canada to seek his fortune. He had an elder brother among the priests of St. Sulpice. These, being anxious to have a fringe of settlements outside of their own

as a sort of screen against Indian attacks, granted to La Salle a quite considerable tract a few miles from Montreal. Here he laid out a village surrounded by a palisade and let out his land to settlers for a trifling rent.

With a view to exploration, he at once began to study the Indian languages. Like Champlain and all the early explorers, he dreamed of a passage to the Pacific and a new route for the commerce of China and Japan. The name which to this day clings to the place which he settled, La Chine (China), is said to have been bestowed by his neighbors, in derision of what they considered his visionary schemes.

After two or three years La Salle, beginning his real life-work, sold his domain and its improvements, equipped a party, and started out into the wilderness. We trace his route as far as the Seneca country, in western New York. Then for two years we lose sight of him altogether. This time he passed among the Indians; and there is the best reason for believing that he discovered the Ohio River and, quite probably, the Illinois.

When Joliet and Marquette ascertained that the outlet of the Great Water was in the Gulf of

Mexico, their discovery put an end to the fond hope of establishing a new route to East India and China by way of the Mississippi, but it inspired a brilliant thought in La Salle's mind. Why should France be shut up in Canada, with its poverty, its rigorous climate, its barren soil, covered with snow for half the year? Why not reach out and seize the vast interior, with its smiling prairies and thousands of miles of fertile soil, with the glorious Mississippi for a waterway? She already held the approach at one end, namely, through the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Let her go forward on the path which lay open before her. To realize this splendid dream became the purpose of his life.

The coming of Count Frontenac to Canada as its governor was a boon to La Salle. Both were essentially men of the world, with ambitions of their own. Both were strong men, daring, ardent, and resolute; and both heartily hated the Jesuits and were hated by them with equal fervor. Both, too, were men of small means who aimed at vast results. In short, they were kindred spirits. But the one was Governor of Canada, and the other was an almost penniless adventurer. This fact determined their relations. La Salle

became a partisan of Frontenac, siding with him against certain fur-traders and the Jesuits. Frontenac became the protector of La Salle, backing his schemes with his influence and giving him a strong recommendation to the King.

Now, Frontenac had built a fort near the lower end of Lake Ontario, about the site of Kingston. It had the look of being a great public benefit, for it would help to hold the Iroquois in check and it would cut off trade from the English. On these grounds the expense of building it was justified. But the Jesuits and the fur-traders were opposed to it, the fur-traders because they foresaw the loss of a large part of their trade. Indians bringing their annual canoe-loads of peltry to market would not take the long trip to Montreal and Quebec, if they could barter them off at a much nearer point. They suspected, with good reason, that this new fort, erected ostensibly for the defence of the country, was really meant to cut off from them the trade that came down the Lakes and turn it into the hands of the Governor and those who might be in secret league with him.

The feeling was very strong, and attempts were made to induce the King to have the ob-

noxious fort demolished. Just then La Salle sailed for France with strong letters from Frontenac. Imagine the rage of his opponents when he returned not only master of the fort, but a titled man, the Sieur de La Salle, with the King's patent in his pocket giving him a princely grant of many square miles on the mainland and the adjacent islands!

But how was a needy adventurer to raise the money to pay for the fort and to do all the high-sounding things that he had promised the King? He counted on raising money on the strength of his great expectations. He was not disappointed. His friends and relatives rejoicing in his good fortune, which they naturally hoped to share, lent large sums of money to enable him to carry out his agreement with his royal master. Now he began piling up a mass of debts that alone would have crushed a common man. He had, besides, a tremendous combination to fight, nearly all the merchants of the colony, backed by the influence of the Jesuits.

Still La Salle might have settled down in his seigniory, commanded his soldiers, lorded it over his colony, controlled the trade of the Lakes, paid off his debts, and have grown enormously rich

within a few years from the profits of the fur-trade. But he flew at higher game than money, and cared for it only as it might serve his ambition. He was dreaming of the Gulf of Mexico and in imagination ruling a Southwestern New France many times larger than the old.

Therefore he took ship again for France. This time he went crowned with success. He had done all and more than all that he had engaged to do. He had torn down the wooden fort and replaced it with one of stone, surmounted with nine cannon. He had erected a forge, a mill, a bakery, barracks, and officers' quarters. He had gathered about him a village of Iroquois, who were under the teaching of two Recollet friars. Some French families had been settled on farms. Land had been cleared and planted. Cattle, fowls, and swine had been brought up from Montreal. Four small vessels had been built for use on the lake and river. Altogether, French civilization was handsomely represented at this lonely outpost; and La Salle had shown what he was capable of doing as an organizer and ruler. Now he went to ask another grant.

Fancy the dismay of his opponents when he came back, in the following year, with an ex-

traordinary commission that gave him authority to "labor at the discovery of the western parts of New France, through which, to all appearance, *a way may be found to Mexico*." The last words show its true purpose. Louis aimed a blow at his enemy, Spain, the mistress of Mexico, and La Salle was the arm through which he meant to strike. The document gave him authority to build forts wherever he saw fit, and to own and govern them under the same conditions as Fort Frontenac. In short, he had a roving commission to go wherever he pleased between the eastern end of Lake Ontario and the borders of Mexico, and to exercise the authority of a royal governor anywhere in all that vast region. But he must do all at his own expense, and he must do it all within five years.

His most serious need was that of money. But, with his usual success in drawing other men's means into his schemes, he obtained a large sum, on which he was to pay interest at the rate of forty per cent. We can see that he was piling up debts fast enough to meet the wishes of his heartiest haters.

Now La Salle was in a position to enter on his grand undertaking, the dream to which he de-

voted his life. His first step was to send a party of men ahead in canoes to Lake Michigan, to trade with the Indians and collect provisions against his coming, while another party, one of whom was the famous Father Hennepin, started in a small vessel up Lake Ontario, to await La Salle's coming at Niagara. In due time they reached the Niagara River, and the earliest published account of the great cataract is Father Hennepin's.[1]

This advance party had orders to begin a fort on the Niagara River, but the distrust of the Senecas proved to be an obstinate barrier. This famous tribe, occupying the Genesee Valley northward to the shore of Lake Ontario, while on the west its territory extended to Lake Erie, was fiercely jealous of white men's coming to plant themselves in their country.

When La Salle arrived, however, with his usual tact in managing Indians, he succeeded in securing their consent to his putting up, not a fort, but a fortified warehouse at the mouth of the Niagara River and building a vessel above the Falls.

[1] The famous falls are first mentioned in the Jesuit "Relations" of 1648. Their name is of Iroquois origin and in the Mohawk dialect is pronounced Nyâgarah.

Now the first of a series of misfortunes befell him in the loss of the little vessel that had brought him to Niagara. She was freighted with the outfit for his great exploration and with goods for barter. But everything was lost, except only the anchors and cables intended for the vessel that was to be built. He bore the loss with his unvarying fortitude.

At last all difficulties were so far overcome that the keel of the little vessel was laid. While the work was going on, Indians were hanging around watching it sullenly, and a squaw told the French that her people meant to burn it. The weather was cold, and the men of the party themselves had little heart in the enterprise. The loss of provisions in the wrecked vessel had put them on short allowance. Only the skill of two Mohegan hunters kept them supplied with food. It was hard work, too, for the builders needed to bring loads from the other vessel on their backs, a distance of some twelve miles.

In spite of all these difficulties, the little craft was finished, and, at the opening of the ice in the spring, there glided down into the Niagara the first keel that ever cut the water of the Upper Lakes, the forerunner of to-day's enormous

tonnage. Her figure-head was a mythical monster, and her name the "Griffin," both taken from Frontenac's coat of arms.

On August 7, the "Griffin" fired her cannon, spread her sails, and bore away up Lake Erie, carrying the expedition which La Salle hoped would make him master of the Mississippi Valley. The plan was to sail to the head of Lake Michigan, near the site of Chicago, then to march to the Illinois River; there to build another vessel, and in the latter to sail down the Mississippi, into the Gulf, and to the very West Indies — an enterprise of Titanic audacity.

The first part of the voyage was delightful. We may wonder whether our voyagers saw one amazing sight which Jonathan Carver describes. "There are," he says, "several islands near the west end of it [Lake Erie] so infested with rattlesnakes that it is very dangerous to land on them. The lake is covered, near the banks of the islands, with the large pond-lily, the leaves of which lie on the water so thick as to cover it entirely for many acres together; and on each of these lay, when I passed over it, wreaths of water-snakes basking in the sun, which amounted to myriads!"

On the shore were verdant prairies and fine

forests. When the voyagers entered Detroit River they saw herds of deer and flocks of wild turkeys, and the hunters easily kept the party supplied with venison and bear meat. On they sailed, across Lake St. Clair and out upon Lake Huron, passed within sight of the Manitoulins, and finally came to anchor in the cove of Mackinaw Strait, where were the famous trading-post and mission-station of Michillimackinac.

At Green Bay La Salle found some of his men who had remained faithful and had collected a large store of furs. This circumstance caused him new perplexity. He had furs enough to satisfy his creditors, and he was strongly moved to go back to the colony and settle with them. On the other hand, he dreaded leaving his party, which would surely be tampered with by his enemies. Should his strong hand be withdrawn, the party probably would go to pieces. Finally he decided to remain with the expedition and to send the "Griffin" back with her valuable cargo to Fort Niagara and with orders to return immediately to the head of Lake Michigan. It was an unfortunate decision. The vessel's pilot was already under suspicion of having treacherously wrecked the vessel which perished on Lake

Ontario. The "Griffin" sailed and never was heard of again. Whether she foundered on the lake, was dashed on the shore, or was plundered and scuttled, La Salle never knew. He believed the latter to have been the case. Her loss was the breaking of an indispensable link in the chain. But La Salle was still ignorant of it, and he went on his way hopefully to the head of Lake Michigan.

A hard time the men had in paddling the heavily laden canoes, subsisting on a scant ration of Indian corn, and at night dragging the canoes up a steep bank and making their cheerless camp. By the time that they reached the site of Milwaukee all were worn out.

They were glad enough when they saw two or three eagles among a great gathering of crows or turkey-buzzards, and, hastening to the spot, they found the torn carcass of a deer, lately killed by wolves. However, as they neared the head of the lake, game became more abundant, and La Salle's famous Mohegan hunters had no difficulty in providing bear's meat and venison.

Winter was fast setting in, and La Salle was anxious to go on to the Illinois towns before the warriors should go away on their usual winter

hunting. But he was compelled to wait for Tonty, an Italian officer of great courage and splendid loyalty who had come out to America as his lieutenant. With twenty men, he was making his way by land down the eastern shore. At last he appeared, with his men half-starved, having been reduced to living on acorns. But where was the "Griffin"? This was the place appointed for her meeting with the expedition. But there were no tidings of her fate. After waiting as long as he could, La Salle, with heavy forebodings, pushed on.

Now the explorers shouldered their canoes and struck out across the frozen swamps. At last they came to a sluggish streamlet, the head-waters of the Kankakee. They launched their canoes on it and were carried, within a few days, into a prairie country strewn with the carcasses of innumerable buffalo, for this was a favorite hunting-ground of the Indians. But not one of the animals was in sight. The men were nearly starving and, at the best, discontented and sullen. Two lean deer and a few geese, all the game that the hunters had been able to secure within several days, were short commons for thirty-three men with appetites sharpened by traveling in the keen

December air. It was a God-send when they found a buffalo-bull mired fast. The famished men quickly despatched him, and by the efforts of twelve of their number dragged the huge carcass out of the slough.

Down the Illinois River the voyagers traveled until they came in sight of wigwams on both sides of the river. La Salle expected trouble, for his enemies had been busy among the Illinois, stirring them up against him by representing that he had incited the Iroquois to make war upon them. He ordered his men to take their arms. Then the eight canoes in line abreast drifted down between the two wings of the encampment.

There was great confusion on both banks. The women screeched, and the men yelled and seized their bows and war-clubs. La Salle knew well how to deal with Indians and that it was poor policy to show himself too eager for peace. He leaped ashore, followed by his men, arms in hand. The Indians were more frightened by his sudden appearance than disposed to attack him, as they at once showed by holding up a peace pipe. And soon they overwhelmed the strangers with lavish hospitality.

These people, who formed one of the largest

branches of the Algonquin stock, were particular objects of hatred to the Iroquois. At one time they were driven across the Mississippi by these ruthless foes, who had traveled five or six hundred miles to attack them. There, probably, they encountered equally savage enemies, the Sioux. At all events, they returned to their old abode on the Illinois River, where La Salle found them. The deadly enmity of the Iroquois toward them burst out again shortly afterward, as we shall see.

La Salle took advantage of the opportunity to assure his hosts that if the Iroquois attacked them, he would stand by them, give them guns, and fight for them. Then he shrewdly added that he intended building a fort among them and a big wooden canoe in which he would descend to the sea and bring goods for them. All this looked very plausible and won their hearts. The next day La Salle and his companions were invited to a feast and, of course, went. The host seized the opportunity of warning them against descending the Great Water. He told them that its banks were infested by ferocious tribes and its waters full of serpents, alligators, dangerous rocks, and whirlpools; in short, that they never would reach the ocean alive.

This harangue was interpreted to La Salle's men by two *coureurs de bois* who understood every word of it. La Salle saw dismay overspreading the faces of his already disheartened men. But when his turn came to speak, he gave the Indians a genuine surprise. "We were not asleep," he said, "when the messenger of my enemies told you that we were spies of the Iroquois. We know all his lies and that the presents he brought you are at this moment buried in the earth under this lodge." This proof of what seemed more than human sagacity overwhelmed the Indians, and they had nothing more to say, little dreaming that La Salle had received secret information from a friendly chief.

Nevertheless, the next morning, when La Salle looked about for his sentinels, not one of them was to be seen. Six of his men, including two of the best carpenters, upon whom he depended for building the vessel, had deserted.

To withdraw his men from the demoralizing influences of the Indian camp, La Salle chose a naturally strong position at some distance down the river, fortified it, and built lodgings for the men, together with a house for the friars. This, the first habitation reared by white men in the

territory now comprised in the State of Illinois, stood a little below the site of Peoria and was called Fort Crèvecœur. This name, Fort Break-Heart, was taken from that of a celebrated fortification in Europe. It was to be a heart-breaker to the enemy.

La Salle believed in the doctrine of work as the best preventive of low spirits, and he kept his men at it. No sooner was the fort finished than he began to build the vessel. Two of his carpenters, we remember, had deserted. "Seeing," he says, "that if I should wait to get others from Montreal, I should lose a whole year, I said one day before my people that I was so vexed to find that the absence of two sawyers would defeat my plans, that I was resolved to try to saw the planks myself, if I could find a single man who would help me with a will." Two men stepped forward and said they would try what they could do. The result was that the work was begun and was pushed along so successfully that within two weeks the hull of the vessel was half finished.

La Salle now felt free to make the unavoidable journey to Montreal, to look after his affairs. His men were in better heart, and the vessel was well on its way to completion. Leaving the faith-

ful Tonty in charge of the fort with its garrison, mostly of scoundrels, he set out with his trusty Mohegan and four Frenchmen.

A few days earlier he had sent off Father Hennepin with two Frenchmen, to explore the lower part of the Illinois. In another place we shall read the story of their adventures.

We shall not follow La Salle on his journey back to Canada. It was a terribly hard experience of sixty-five days' travel through a country beset with every form of difficulty and swarming with enemies, "the most arduous journey," says the chronicler, "ever made by Frenchmen in America." But there was a worse thing to come. When La Salle reached Niagara, he learned not only the certainty of the "Griffin's" loss, with her valuable cargo, but that a vessel from France freighted with indispensable goods for him had been wrecked at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and a party of twenty hired men on their way from Europe to join him had, on their arrival, been so disheartened by reports of his failure and death, that only four persisted in their purpose.

This was but the beginning of a series of disasters. His agents at Fort Frontenac had plundered him; his creditors had seized his property;

several of his canoes loaded with furs had been lost in the rapids of the St. Lawrence; and a letter from Tonty, brought to him by two *voyageurs*, told him that nearly all the men, after destroying Fort Crèvecœur, had deserted.

What a blow! Fort Crèvecœur, with its supplies, was the base of his great enterprise. Now it was destroyed, its garrison gone, and Tonty, with a few faithful men, alone remained of his costly expedition. But this lion-hearted man, whom no disasters could daunt, borrowed more money at ruinous rates of interest, captured a party of his deserters on Lake Ontario, killing two who resisted arrest and locking up the others at Fort Frontenac, and hastened off on the long journey to relieve Tonty in the Illinois country.

When the party reached the Illinois River they beheld a stirring sight. Far and near, the prairie was alive with buffalo, while hundreds were plunging and snorting in the water. The opportunity was not to be lost. The voyagers landed and encamped for a hunt. For three days they gave themselves up to the excitement of the chase, killing twelve buffalo, besides deer, geese, and swans. Then, with an ample supply of dried and smoked meat, they re-embarked.

When they reached the site of the populous Illinois town, the place was desolate, not a human being in sight. Only heaps of ashes and charred poles and stakes showed where the lodges had stood. The whole meadow was blackened by fire. Hundreds of wolves skulked about the burial ground of the village. The ground was strewn with broken bones and mangled corpses. Every grave had been rifled, and the bodies had been thrown down from the scaffolds where many of them had been placed.

It was evident what had happened. The Iroquois had made a descent, in some way had missed their prey, and had wreaked their vengeance on the dead. But where were Tonty and his men? There was no sign of their having been killed. Neither had any trace been observed of their passing up the river. It must be that they had escaped down the river with the Illinois in their flight. La Salle promptly determined what to do. Leaving a part of his men, he hid his baggage and started down the stream with a few trusty men carrying little besides their arms. When they reached the ruins of Fort Crèvecœur, they found the vessel on the stocks untouched.

La Salle pushed on down to the mouth of the river, without finding a trace of his missing countrymen. Now the Great Water rolled before him. Once he had dreamed night and day of seeing it. But to see it under such circumstances as these, — what a mockery of his hopes! The one thought on his mind was to find and rescue Tonty. There was no sign of him here. To go further would have been useless, and La Salle turned back, paddling day and night, and rejoined his men whom he had left. Then all started northward. On their way down they had followed the Kankakee. Now they took the Des Plaines route. Near a bark cabin a bit of wood that had been cut with a saw showed that Tonty and his men had gone this way. If they had but left at the fork of the stream some sign of their passage, La Salle's party would have seen it on their way down, and all this anxiety would have been obviated.

With his mind relieved, La Salle was glad to rest for a while at his little Fort Miami, situated at the mouth of the St. Joseph River.

Tonty had passed through perilous straits. The desertion of the larger part of his men left him with but three fighting men and two friars.

Next came a tremendous war-party of Iroquois to attack the Illinois, in the midst of whom he was. For various reasons, the Illinois suspected that the Frenchmen had brought this trouble upon them and, but for Tonty's coolness, would have mobbed and murdered the little handful of white men. When the Iroquois began the attack, Tonty went among them, at the peril of his life, actually receiving a wound from an infuriated young warrior, and succeeded in stopping the fighting by telling the Iroquois that the Illinois numbered twelve hundred, and that there were sixty armed Frenchmen, ready to back them.

The effect of this timely fabrication was magical. The Iroquois at once were for peace and employed Tonty to arrange a truce. That night the Illinois slipped away down the river. The Iroquois followed them, on the opposite shore, watching for an opportunity to attack. This did not offer itself, but they actually drove the Illinois out of their own country, after perpetrating a butchery of women and children.

Meanwhile they had discovered Tonty's deception and were enraged. He had robbed them of a prey for which they had marched hundreds of miles. Only a wholesome fear of Count

Frontenac, of whom the Indians stood in great awe, kept them from falling on the little band. As it was, matters looked so stormy that the Frenchmen stood on the watch all night, expecting an attack. At daybreak the chiefs bade them begone. Accordingly they embarked in a leaky canoe and started up the river.

At their first stop Father Ribourde strolled away. When he did not reappear his comrades became alarmed. Tonty and one of the men went in search of him. They followed his tracks until they came to the trail of a band of Indians who had apparently carried him off. They afterward learned that a roving band of Kickapoos, one of the worst specimens of the Algonquin stock, prowling around the Iroquois camp in search of scalps, had murdered the inoffensive old man and carried his scalp in triumph to their village.

Another of their party came near to meeting with an untimely end, but his ingenuity saved his life. They had abandoned their worthless canoe and were making their way on foot, living on acorns and roots, when the young Sieur de Boisrondet wandered off and was lost. The flint of his gun had dropped out, and he had no bullets.

But he cut a pewter porringer into slugs, discharged his gun with a fire-brand, and thus killed wild turkeys. After several days he was so fortunate as to rejoin his party.

The poor fellows suffered terribly from cold and hunger while making their way along the shore of Lake Michigan, but finally found a hospitable refuge among the Pottawattamies, of Green Bay, a friendly Algonquin tribe.

La Salle's heart was as much as ever set on following the Great Water to the sea. But he had learned the difficulties in the way of building a vessel and had resolved to travel by canoe.

The winter at Fort Miami was spent by him in organizing the expedition. With this view he gathered about him a number of Indians from the far East who had fled for safety to the western wilds after the disastrous issue of King Philip's War, chiefly Abenakis, from Maine, and Mohegans from the Hudson. These New England Indians, who had long been the deadly foes of the English Puritans, were happy in enrolling themselves under a Frenchman and were ready to go with La Salle anywhere. His plan was to form a great Indian confederation, like that of the Five Nations, and powerful enough to resist it.

With this powerful body of Indians, backed by a sufficient number of French guns, he could hold the Mississippi Valley against all enemies, white or red.

When he had opened the route to the Gulf of Mexico by passing down the Great River and taking possession of its whole length in the name of the French King, there would be a new outlet for the immensely valuable fur-trade of all that vast area drained by it and its tributaries. Instead of the long journey down the Lakes and the St. Lawrence, trade would take the shorter and easier route to the Gulf of Mexico.

But how could even La Salle fail to see the enormous difficulties in the way, — the hostility of remote tribes down the river; the sure opposition of Spain, which was supreme on and around the Gulf, and, most of all, the bitter enmity of the French in Canada? The scheme meant disaster to their interests, by turning a large part of their trade into another channel and setting up on the Mississippi a new and powerful rival of Canada, with La Salle at its head.

All commercial Canada and nearly all official Canada were already incensed against him on the mere suspicion of his purposes. If they saw

these taking actual form, would they not rage and move heaven and earth, that is to say, Louis the Great,[1] to crush them? A man of less than La Salle's superhuman audacity would not in his wildest moments have dreamed of such a thing. He deliberately cherished the scheme and set himself calmly to executing it.

On December 21, 1682, the expedition started from Fort Miami. It consisted of twenty-three white men, eighteen Indian warriors, and ten squaws, with three children. These New England savages had made a bloody record in their own country, knew well how to use guns, and were better adapted to the work in hand than raw Europeans, however brave, who had no experience of Indian warfare.

On February 6 the voyagers saw before them the broad current of the Mississippi, full of floating ice. For a long distance they paddled their canoes down the mighty current without adventure. As they fared on day by day, they realized that they were entering a summer land. The warm air and hazy sunlight and opening flowers were in delightful contrast with the ice and snow from which they had emerged. Once

[1] The chosen emblem of the "Grand Monarch" was the Sun.

there seemed to be danger of an attack from Indians whose war-drum they could hear beating. A fog lifted, and the Indians, looking across the river, saw the Frenchmen at work building a fort. Peace signals were displayed from both sides, and soon the white men and their Indian allies from rugged New England were hobnobbing in the friendliest way with these dusky denizens of the southwestern woods. These were a band of the Arkansas, the same people who had treated Joliet and Marquette so handsomely. They lavished every kind attention on their guests and kept them three days. The friar, Membré, who chronicled the expedition, describes them as "gay, civil, and free-hearted, exceedingly well-formed and with all so modest that not one of them would take the liberty to enter our hut, but all stood quietly at the door." He adds, "we did not lose the value of a pin while we were among them."

La Salle had now reached the furthest point of Joliet and Marquette's exploration. He reared a cross, took possession of the country in his master's name, and pushed on. On the western side of the river they visited the home of the Taensas Indians and were amazed at the degree

of social advancement which they found among them. There were square dwellings, built of sun-baked mud mixed with straw, and arranged in regular order around an open area; and the King was attended by a council of sixty grave old men wearing white cloaks of the fine inner fibre of mulberry bark. The temple was a large structure, full of a dim, mysterious gloom, within which burned a sacred fire, as an emblem of the sun, watched and kept up unceasingly by two aged priests.

Altogether, the customs and social condition of these people were more like those of the ancient Peruvians and Mexicans than those of the wild tribes with whom the explorers were familiar. When the chief visited La Salle he came in great state, preceded by women who bore white fans, and wearing a disk of burnished copper, — probably to indicate that he was a child of the Sun, for the royal family claimed this high lineage.

The next day the Frenchmen visited a kindred tribe, the Natchez, among whom they observed similar usages. They were hospitably entertained and spent the night in their villages. Their chief town was some miles distant, near the site of the

city of Natchez. Here again La Salle planted a cross, less as a symbol of Christianity than of French occupation.[1]

[1] The Taensas and the Natchez were singularly interesting tribes. Their social organization did not differ radically from that of other Indians. But they had developed one peculiar feature: the principal clan had become a ruling caste, and the chiefs were revered as demi-gods and treated with extravagant honor, numerous human victims being sacrificed at the death of one.

The following remarks about the Taensas and the Natchez are taken from Father Gravier's account of his voyage, in 1700, down the Mississippi: — "The Natchez and the Taensas practice polygamy, steal, and are very vicious, the girls and women more than the men and boys. The temple having been reduced to ashes last year by lightning, the old man who sits guardian said that the spirit was incensed because no one was put to death on the decease of the last chief, and that it was necessary to appease him. Five women had the cruelty to cast their children into the fire, in sight of the French who recounted it to me; and but for the French there would have been a great many more children burned."

At their first coming, the French found a warm welcome among the Natchez, and Fort Rosalie in the Natchez country (built shortly after the founding of New Orleans) was the scene for many years of constant friendly reunions of the two races. But an arrogant and cruel commandant, by his ill-judged severity, at a time when the warlike Chickasaws were inciting the Natchez to rise, produced a fearful explosion. One day a solitary soldier appeared in the hamlet of New Orleans with fearful news. Fort Rosalie had been surprised, its garrison of over two hundred men massacred, and two hundred and fifty women and children taken prisoners. In the war that followed, the Choctaws sided with the French, the Chickasaws and Yazoos with the Natchez. Finally the French, under St. Dénis, won a complete victory; the women and children taken at Fort Rosalie were recaptured and brought to New Orleans,

Near the mouth of the Red River, in the neighborhood of the place where Soto had been buried, the voyagers, while attempting to follow some fleeing natives, received a shower of arrows from a canoe. La Salle, anxious to avoid a hostile encounter, drew his men off. No doubt the Indians of this region preserved proud traditions of their forefathers' pursuit of the escaping Spaniards, the remnant of Soto's expedition.

On April 6 with what elation must La Salle have beheld the waters of the Gulf sparkling in the rays of the southern sun! The dream of years was realized. His long struggle and his hopes and failures and renewed efforts were crowned with success. One hundred and ninety years after Columbus's discovery, at enormous expense, he had led a party from the great freshwater seas to the southern ocean, and had opened, he fondly believed, a new route for trade. But long years were to elapse ere his vision should become a reality.

Proudly and hopefully, in full view of the sea, he reared a cross and a column bearing the arms

and the Natchez tribe was completely broken up. The prisoners were sent to die in the cruel slavery of the San Domingo sugar plantations, while a few who escaped the French were adopted into the Chickasaw nation.

of France and, with the singing of hymns and volleys of musketry, solemnly proclaimed Louis, of France, to be the rightful sovereign "of this country of Louisiana," as he named it, "the seas, harbors, ports, bays, adjacent straits, and all the nations, peoples, provinces, cities, towns, villages, mines, minerals, fisheries, streams, and rivers within the extent of the said Louisiana, and also to the mouth of the River of Palms" (the Rio Grande). A tremendous claim surely, the historian Parkman remarks, covering a region watered by a thousand rivers, ranged by a thousand warlike tribes, in short, an empire in itself, and all by virtue of a feeble human voice, inaudible at half a mile!

Alas! at that very time, La Salle's enemies in Canada had gained the upper hand and had secured the recall of his mainstay, Count Frontenac. This meant that he could do nothing more from Canada as a base of operations.

On the return voyage the party had a hard time. There was the labor of paddling the canoes, day after day, against the strong current, under a blazing sun. Their supplies were exhausted, and they had little to eat but the flesh of alligators. In their extremity, they applied to

the Quinipissas, a little above the site of New Orleans, for corn. They got it, but had to repulse a treacherous attack at night. The Coroas, too, who at the first had shown themselves very friendly, were evidently bent on murdering the guests whom they entertained with pretended hospitality. Only the watchfulness of the Frenchmen and the terror inspired by their guns saved them from attack. Plainly these natives had grown suspicious. Then La Salle was seized with sickness which nearly cut him off, and which detained him for weeks. So soon as he was able to travel, he moved on by slow stages and, about the end of August, still weak and suffering, reached Fort Miami, from which he had started eight months before. Of course, he had come back empty-handed, and there was nothing substantial to show for the vast expense that had been incurred. His associates in Canada, who had advanced the money, must fain content themselves with the expectation that the future would repay them.

In the meantime La Salle was carrying out his plan of founding a colony of French and Indians on the banks of the Illinois. Here he built Fort St. Louis on a cliff, probably the one now called

"Starved Rock," at the mouth of Vermilion River. Around its base, under its protection, were clustered the lodges of various Indian bands, of different tribes, while the Illinois, numbering several thousands, were encamped on the other side of the river. But La Salle soon found that, with the new governor, La Barre, inimical to him, he could get no supplies from Canada. The men whom he sent for goods were detained, and finally the Governor seized Fort Frontenac and put men in charge of it.

La Salle had no resource but to appeal from the Governor's high-handed injustice to the King. He left Tonty in command of Fort St. Louis and departed for France.

# Chapter XIV

## LA SALLE AND THE FOUNDING OF LOUISIANA

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## LA SALLE AND THE FOUNDING OF LOUISIANA

La Salle leads an Expedition to seize the Mouth of the Mississippi. — A Series of Mishaps. — Landing at Matagorda Bay. — Fort St. Louis of Texas. — Seeking the Mississippi, La Salle explores the Interior of Texas. — Mounted Comanches. — La Salle starts out to go to Canada for Relief. — Interesting Experiences. — La Salle assassinated. — Tonty's Heroic Efforts to rescue him and his Party. — Supplement: The Founding of New Orleans.

ON a day in February, 1685, a party landed from one of three vessels lying off the entrance of Matagorda Bay, on the coast of Texas. They were under the command of La Salle. What was this extraordinary man doing there? In accordance with the plan which had long filled his mind, of planting French forts and colonies in the valley of the Great River and giving its trade an outlet into the Gulf of Mexico, he had come to establish a fort on the Mississippi. This, the first part of his plan, was very rational, if only he had the vast resources needed for such an undertaking.

But the second part was so crazy that we must suppose that his mind was beginning to give way. With a handful of Frenchmen and an army of fifteen thousand savages, which he professed to be able to muster and to march down the Mississippi, he had promised the King of France that he would conquer the northern province of Mexico, called New Biscay, and get possession of its valuable silver mines.

Louis had cheerfully accepted this insane proposition — insane, if we consider the pitiful equipment that La Salle said would suffice, namely, two ships and two hundred men. Louis was indeed furiously jealous of the Spanish King's success in the New World and irritated by his arrogant treatment of the Gulf of Mexico as private property of Spain, — as completely a "closed sea" as if it had been a duck-pond in his palace yard. Moreover, there was war now between the two countries, and he would gladly seize an opportunity of striking his rival a blow in what seemed an exposed part. Besides, the risk would be small. If La Salle failed, the loss would be chiefly his; if he succeeded, a province of Mexico would be a shining jewel in the French crown.

So here was La Salle, with an outfit corre-

sponding with his mad scheme — but three ships, only one a man-of-war, the "Joly," one a little frigate, the "Belle," and one a transport, the "Aimable"; for soldiers, the destined army of invasion, a parcel of rapscallions raked up from the docks and the prisons; for colonists some mechanics and laborers, priests and volunteers, with the usual proportion of "broken gentlemen," some peasant families looking for homes in the New World, and even some wretched girls who expected to find husbands in the land of promise. This ill-assorted little mob to seize and colonize the mouth of the Mississippi and to wrest a province from Spain!

From the first everything had gone wrong. La Salle and the ship-captains, who could not endure his haughty manners, quarreled incessantly. A Spanish cruiser captured his fourth vessel, laden with indispensable supplies for the colony. Then he was seized with a dangerous fever; and while the vessels waited at San Domingo for him to be well enough to resume the voyage, his villains roamed the island and rioted in debauchery.

Its destination being the mouth of the Mississippi, what was the expedition doing at Matagorda Bay, in Texas? This was the result of

another folly. Not a soul on board knew the navigation of the Gulf, so carefully had Spain guarded her secret. The pilots had heard much of the currents in those waters, and they made so excessive allowance for them that when land was sighted, instead of being, as they supposed, about Appalachee Bay, they were on the coast of Texas, probably about Galveston Bay. In the end it proved to be a fatal mistake, wrecking the enterprise.

On New Year's day La Salle landed and found only a vast marshy plain. Clearly, this was not the mouth of the Great River. He returned on board, and the vessel stood westward along the coast, every eye on board strained to catch some indication of what they sought, whereas they were all the time sailing further from it. At one point where they stopped, some Indians, who doubtless were familiar with the sight of white men, swam out through the surf and came on board without any sign of fear. But, nobody knowing their language, nothing could be learned from them.

After hovering for three weeks in sight of land, La Salle, perplexed beyond measure, but forced to decide because the captain of the man-of-war was impatient to land the men and to sail for

France, announced that they were at one of the mouths of the Mississippi and ordered the people and stores put ashore.

Scarcely were they landed, when a band of Indians set upon some men at work and carried off some of them. La Salle immediately seized his arms, called to some of his followers, and started off in pursuit. Just as he was entering the Indian village, the report of a cannon came from the bay. It frightened the savages so that they fell flat on the ground and gave up their prisoners without difficulty. But a chill foreboding seized La Salle. He knew that the gun was a signal of disaster, and, looking back, he saw the "Aimable" furling her sails. Her captain, in violation of orders, and disregarding buoys which La Salle had put down, had undertaken to come in under sail and had ended by wrecking her. Soon she began to break up, and night fell upon the wretched colonists bivouacking on the shore, strewn with boxes and barrels saved from the wreck, while Indians swarmed on the beach, greedy for plunder, and needed to be kept off by a guard.

What a situation, ludicrous, had it not been tragic! Instead of holding the key of the Mis-

sissippi Valley, the expeditionists did not even know where they were. Instead of the fifteen thousand warriors who were expected to march with them to the conquest of New Biscay, the squalid savages in their neighborhood annoyed them in every possible way, set fire to the prairie when the wind blew toward them, stole their goods, ambushed a party that came in quest of the missing articles, and killed two of them.

Next came sickness, due to using brackish water, carrying off five or six a day. When the captain of the little "Belle," the last remaining vessel — for the man-of-war had sailed for France — got drunk and wrecked her on a sand-bar, the situation was truly desperate. Nobody knew where they were, and the last means of getting away by water had perished.

In the meantime La Salle had chosen a place for a temporary fort, on a river which the French called La Vache (Cow River), on account of the buffaloes in its vicinity, and which retains the name, in the Spanish form, Lavaca.

La Salle returned from an exploration unsucessful. He had found nothing, learned nothing; only, he knew now that he was not near the Mississippi. The summer had worn away,

steadily filling the graveyard, and, with the coming of the autumn, he prepared for a more extensive exploration. On the last day of October he started out with fifty men on his grand journey of exploration, leaving Joutel, his faithful lieutenant, in command of the fort, which contained thirty-four persons, including three Récollet friars and a number of women and girls.

The winter passed not uncomfortably for the party in the fort. The surrounding prairie swarmed with game, buffaloes, deer, turkeys, ducks, geese, and plover. The river furnished an abundance of turtles, and the bay of oysters. Joutel gives a very entertaining account of his killing rattlesnakes, which his dog was wont to find, and of shooting alligators. The first time that he went buffalo-hunting, the animals were very numerous, but he did not seem to kill any. Every one that he fired at lumbered away, as if it were unhurt. After some time he found one dead, then others, and he learned that he had killed several. After their wont they had kept their feet while life lasted. Even the friars took a hand in buffalo-hunting.

La Salle and his party, meanwhile, were roaming wearily from tribe to tribe, usually fighting

their way, always seeking the Mississippi. At last they came to a large river which at first they mistook for it. Here La Salle built a stockade and left some of his men, of whose fate nothing was afterward heard. Then he set out to return to Fort St. Louis, as he called his little fort on Lavaca. One day in March he reappeared with his tattered and footsore followers, some of them carrying loads of buffalo-meat.

Surely the condition of affairs was dismal in the extreme. More than a year gone, and as yet the Frenchmen did not even know where they were. The fierce heat of another summer was near. Still La Salle, with his matchless courage, so soon as he recovered from a fit of illness, formed a desperate resolve. He would start out again, find the Mississippi, ascend that river and the Illinois to Canada, and bring relief to the fort. This time the party was composed of twenty men, some of them clad in deerskin, others in the garments of those who had died. On April 22 they started out.

Months went by. Then, to the surprise of those in the fort, one evening La Salle reappeared, followed by eight men of the twenty who had gone out with him. One had been lost,

two had deserted, one had been seized by an alligator, and six had given out on the march and probably perished. The survivors had encountered interesting experiences. They had crossed the Colorado on a raft. Nika, La Salle's favorite Shawanoe hunter, who had followed him to France and thence to Texas, had been bitten by a rattlesnake, but had recovered. Among the Cenis Indians, a branch of the Caddo family, which includes the famed Pawnees, they met with the friendliest welcome and saw plenty of horses, silver lamps, swords, muskets, money, and other articles, all Spanish, which these people had obtained from the fierce Comanches, who had taken them in raids on the Mexican border. They also met some of the Comanches themselves and were invited to join them in a foray into New Mexico. But La Salle had, necessarily, long since given up his mad scheme of conquest and was thinking only of extricating himself from his pitiable dilemma.

This seems to have been the first meeting of Frenchmen with mounted Indians of the plains. The possession of horses, which had strayed or been stolen from Spanish settlements, had transformed these wild rovers from foot-travelers, such

as Cabeza de Vaca and Coronado found them, having no other domestic animals than dogs, into matchless horsemen and the most dangerous brigands on the continent, capable of covering hundreds of miles in an incredibly short space of time. Splendid specimens of savage manhood, presenting the best type of the Shoshonee stock, they amply avenged the terror which the sight of mounted Spaniards at first struck into the hearts of the aborigines, by harrying the colonists and laying the border in blood and ashes, as they sometimes do to this day.[1]

[1] These matchless horsemen, probably unsurpassed in the world, are also great jockeys, passionately fond of horse-racing and deeply versed in all its tricks. The following laughable account of a race that he witnessed is given by Col. Dodge in his very entertaining book, "Our Wild Indians": "A band of Comanches once camped near Fort Chadbourne, in Texas. Some of the officers were decidedly 'horsey,' owning blood horses whose relative speed was well known. The Comanche chief was bantered for a race, and, after several days of manœuvring, a race was made against the third best horse of the garrison, distance four hundred yards.

"The Indians wagered robes and plunder of various kinds, to the value of sixty or seventy dollars, against money, flour, sugar, etc., to a like amount. At the appointed time the Indians 'showed' a miserable sheep of a pony, with legs like churns; a three-inch coat of rough hair stuck out all over the body; and a general expression of neglect, helplessness, and patient suffering struck pity into the hearts of all beholders. The rider was a stal-

From the Cenis villages, where they bought five horses, the Frenchmen went as far, perhaps, as the Sabine River, encamped there for two months, detained by La Salle's illness with fever, and then, on account of their weakened condition, returned to Fort St. Louis.

wart buck of one hundred and seventy pounds, looking big and strong enough to carry the poor beast on his shoulders. He was armed with a huge club, with which, after the word was given, he belabored the miserable animal from start to finish. To the astonishment of all the whites, the Indian won by a neck.

"Another race was proposed by the officers, and, after much 'dickering,' accepted by the Indians, against the next best horse of the garrison. The bets were doubled; and in less than an hour the second race was run by the same pony, with the same apparent exertion and with exactly the same result.

"The officers, thoroughly disgusted, proposed a third race and brought to the ground a magnificent Kentucky mare, of the true Lexington blood. The Indians accepted the race and not only doubled bets as before, but piled up everything they could raise, seemingly almost crazed with the excitement of their previous success. The riders mounted, and the word was given. Throwing away his club, the Indian rider gave a whoop, at which the sheep-like pony pricked up his ears and went away like the wind almost two feet to the mare's one. The last fifty yards of the course was run by the pony with the rider sitting face to his tail, making hideous grimaces and beckoning to the rider of the mare to come on.

"It afterwards transpired that the old sheep was a trick and straight-race pony, celebrated among all the tribes of the south, and had lately won for his master six hundred ponies among the Kickapoos of the Indian Nation."

A deeper pall of gloom settled upon the little band of exiles. They had now been two years on that forlorn spot, and still they had not even found their way out. From one hundred and eighty their number had dwindled to forty-five. Clearly, there was but one thing to be done. If anybody was to remain alive, the journey to Canada must be accomplished, at all costs. This time La Salle determined to take Joutel with him, leaving Barbier in command of the little party in the fort.

The New Year, 1687, came, and a few days later, with sighs and tears, the parting took place which many felt was for all time, and the travelers went away in mournful silence, with their meagre outfit packed on the horses, leaving Barbier to hold the fort with his little band of twenty persons, including all the women and children and a few disabled men.

We shall not attempt to trace closely the movements of the travelers. For more than two months they journeyed in a northeasterly direction. At the best, they were in wretched plight, with nothing for shoes but raw buffalo-hide, which hardened about the foot and held it in the grip of a vise. After a while they bought dressed deer-

skin from the Indians and made themselves moccasins. Rivers and streams they crossed, two or three at a time, in a boat made of buffalo-hide, while the horses swam after them. They met Indians almost daily and held friendly intercourse with them.[1]

Once they saw a band of a hundred and fifty warriors attacking a herd of buffalo with lances, and a stirring sight it was. These warriors entertained the Europeans most handsomely. Says La Salle's brother, the priest Cavelier, "They took us straight to the cabin of their great chief or captain, where they first washed our hands, our heads, and our feet with warm water; after which they presented us boiled and roast meat to eat, and an unknown fish, cooked whole, that was six feet long, laid in a dish of its length. It was of a wonderful taste, and we preferred it to meat." Here the way-worn travelers were glad to buy thirty horses — enough to give every one of them a mount, and to carry their baggage besides — all for thirty knives, ten hatchets, and six dozen needles!

[1] They learned from these Indians to handle skin-boats, or "bull-boats," such as we shall see were in constant use among the Mandans of the upper Missouri.

In one of the villages they witnessed the catching of an alligator twelve feet long on a large hook made of bone and baited with meat. The Indians amused themselves an entire day with torturing it. They would have been keenly disappointed, had they known how little this animal, so low in the scale of life as to be almost insensible to pain, suffered from their ingenious cruelty.

The Colorado and the Trinity were reached. A deluge of rain kept them weather-bound for four or five days. It was a gloomy time. What added fuel to the flame was that La Salle had with him a young nephew, named Moranget, who presumed on his relation to the leader and behaved most overbearingly to the men.

One day it chanced that some of the men were separated from the main body when Nika killed two buffaloes. They sent word to La Salle, in order that he might have the meat brought in on the horses. Accordingly, he dispatched his nephew, Moranget, with two other men, for that purpose. This was just the opportunity the malcontents desired. Besides, Moranget incensed them by flying into a passion because they had reserved certain portions of the meat for themselves, and by seizing the whole of it. They laid their plans

and, in the dead of the night, murdered him, La Salle's servant Saget, and his faithful Indian, Nika.

Now they had to choose between killing La Salle and being killed by him, as soon as he should learn the facts. They laid an ambush for him, and when he came in the morning to look after the missing men, they shot him dead. Then the murderers stripped his body, dragged it into the bushes, and left it to be torn by buzzards.

Thus died, in the prime of his manhood, one who had done more than any other toward the opening of our continent. He had traversed regions where white men were almost unheard of. He had launched the first vessel that ever floated on the vast inland seas above Niagara Falls. He had established the French in the Illinois region, opening the way for the possession of the Mississippi Valley. He had drawn hostile Indian tribes together into a league strong enough to resist the Long House. He had traveled thousands and thousands of miles on foot and by canoe. He had led the first party of white men from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. His foresight had grasped the commercial value of the Mississippi Valley, and, triumphing over enormous difficulties, he had opened the Great

West to our race. And now all his greatness was come to this, to die in the wilderness by an assassin's hand!

After the death of the leader, a little party, among whom were Joutel and La Salle's brother, the friar Cavelier, after many strange experiences, finally made their way down the Arkansas River to the Mississippi. There, to their inexpressible joy, they found two of their countrymen who had been left there by Tonty. That brave man and loyal friend, when he received the news, by the way of France, of his former leader's disastrous landing, had at once, at his own expense, fitted out an expedition and led it down the Illinois to the mouth of the Mississippi. Of course, he did not find La Salle or any trace of him there. He had then returned to his post, leaving some of his men at the mouth of the Arkansas. These escorted the survivors of La Salle's party to Canada, whence they sailed to France, having made one of the most remarkable journeys on record. They arrived in Europe, the sole known survivors of the expedition that had left France three years before.

Louis the Great, when he heard the news of the failure of the enterprise, took no steps to

relieve the forlorn little band of exiles on the coast of Texas. Not so Tonty. That brave soul determined to rescue them, if possible. For the third time he voyaged down the Mississippi, turned up the Red River, and penetrated as far as the country of the Caddoes.[1] There he lost the most of his ammunition in crossing a river, his men mutinied and refused to go further, and he was compelled to turn back. On his way down the Red River he encountered a flood and traveled more than a hundred miles through country covered with water. The party slept on logs laid side by side and were reduced to eating their dogs. Few men who figure in our country's early story are more deserving of honorable remembrance than this man with one hand and with the heart of a lion.

The French King neglected the exiles in Texas, but the Spanish King did not. He ordered a force sent from Mexico, to destroy the nest of invaders. When the Spanish soldiers arrived on the spot, not a human being was to be seen. The poor little fort was a ruin, and a few skele-

[1] These people, sometimes called the Pawnee family, were scattered, in various wandering bands, from eastern Texas as far north as the Missouri.

tons were all that remained of its former inmates. The Indians in the neighborhood told a story of a band of warriors who had entrapped the garrison into opening the gates, on the plea of trading, and then had rushed in and massacred them.

Thus ended, for the time, La Salle's brilliant scheme of colonizing Louisiana.

## Supplement to Chapter XIV

**The Executor of La Salle's Plan of Colonization. — First Experiences of the Settlers. — Bienville's Shrewdness in getting rid of the English. — New Orleans Founded. — Character of the Population. — Indian Wars.**

LA SALLE was dead, but his bright dream of France enthroned on the Mississippi, holding in her hand the sceptre of the great West, was too vital to die.

It was growing more and more into the consciousness of sea-going Europe, that the nation holding the mouth of the Great River would grasp the key to the undeveloped wealth of the Western World. So it was that when France stretched forth her hand to seize the coveted prize, she found rivals in the field, Spain and

The Murder of La Salle

Great Britain struggling for a foothold, Spain already planted at Pensacola, the English nosing about the mouth of the Mississippi.

The man who was destined to achieve what La Salle had been hindered from accomplishing only by the blunder of his pilots and the jealousy of his associates, was Jean Baptiste LeMoyne de Bienville.

He was of that fine French Canadian stock that had already produced Joliet, the brave explorer, and he belonged to a family whose seven sons all won distinction, four of them dying in the service of their country. When he came on the enterprise in which he was destined to complete La Salle's unfinished work, he was a midshipman of twenty-two serving with his older brother, Iberville, who was winning renown as a brave and skilful naval captain. Though possessing none of La Salle's brilliancy of genius, and never called on to make those heroic exertions or to exhibit that amazing fortitude which were so conspicuous in the case of the great explorer, he still exhibited qualities which well fitted him for the task that fell to him, and which earned for him the title of "Father of Louisiana."

To us it may seem strange that the first reach-

ing out of France toward the incredibly rich Mississippi Valley did not touch the valley itself, but made its lodgment on a sandy bluff overlooking a bay in the territory of what is now the State of Mississippi. So it was, however, and the fact only shows how little was grasped the true meaning of La Salle's gigantic scheme.

In January, 1699, fifteen years after the great Pathfinder had made his misguided landing in Texas, a small fleet from Brest was hovering about the mouth of Mobile River seeking a place for settlement. It was commanded by Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville. With him were his two brothers, Sauvolle and Bienville, and Father Anastase Douay, who had accompanied La Salle.

One of the first spots which the Frenchmen visited bore evidences of a ghastly tragedy. So numerous were the human bones bleaching on the sandy soil that they called it Massacre Island (to-day Dauphin Island). It was surmised — and with some plausibility — that here had perished some portion of the ill-fated following of Pamphile de Narvaez. (See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," p. 200.)

Another island, farther to the west, chiefly impressed the visitors by the great number of

animals, of a species new to them, which they found there. Isle des Chats they called it, and as "Cat Island" it is known to this day. Had the Frenchmen been naturalists, they would have seen that there was more of the bear than of the cat about this creature, for it was none other than our sly friend, the raccoon.

Leaving his vessels at anchor near the mouth of Mobile River, Iberville, with his brother Bienville and Father Douay, went in search of the mouth of the Mississippi. They found it and ascended the river a considerable distance. What assured them that they really were on the Great River was that they received from the Bayagoulas a letter which Tonty had left with them for La Salle, when he made, in 1686, that heroic journey all the way from the Illinois country to the Gulf, in the vain effort to succor his chief.

Another interesting relic which the explorers are said to have seen, was a coat of mail shown to them by the Indians near the Red River, as once having belonged to a Spaniard. Though nearly one hundred and sixty years had gone by since Hernando de Soto's famous expedition, it is by no means improbable that this was a genuine relic of that enterprise. Naturally, the In-

dians would have highly prized and would have kept, as a precious trophy, such a reminder of their forefathers' heroic stand against the dastardly invaders.

The appearance on the river of the two English vessels, whose captain frankly said that he was seeking a place for a settlement, was conclusive evidence that France was none too early in reaching out for the prize that others coveted. Bienville has the credit of getting rid of the Britons by telling the officer that he might easily judge how numerous and strong were his master's, the French King's, subjects, in that region, from seeing them on the river in small boats — a piece of reasoning which was rather ingenious than ingenuous. It had its effect in sending away the Briton with "a flea in his ear." "English Turn," the name given to a great bend in the stream some miles below New Orleans, keeps alive the memory of that piece of shrewdness. Not far distant, by the way, is the field where, in 1815, the British regulars, under Sir Edward Pakenham, received a disastrous defeat at the hands of Andrew Jackson and his American riflemen.

Iberville planted his first settlement at Biloxi,

on Mississippi Sound. Other French posts were shortly afterward established on Cat Island, Dauphin Island, which is at the mouth of Mobile Bay, and at Mobile. A little later Bienville built a fort fifty-four miles above the mouth of the Great River, and he early began to insist that the future of the colony lay on its banks, not on the shores and sandy islands of the Gulf. But the time had not yet come when his ideas would prevail. The wretched colony must first go through a dismal experience of languishing, in consequence of which the seat of government was removed to Mobile, and of actual famine.

At last, in 1718, Bienville, who by the death of his brother had succeeded to the direction of affairs, with twenty-five convicts from France and as many carpenters and some *voyageurs* from the Illinois River, founded the city of New Orleans.

At the first the outlook was far from hopeful. The site was but a few feet above the sea-level and was subject to constant inundation. Most unfavorable reports went back to Mobile, which for five years longer remained the seat of government. The population, too, was rude and lawless, being made up of trappers, redemptioners having a period of years to serve, transported fe-

males, inmates of the House of Correction, Choctaw squaws, and negro slave women — all, as an old writer says, "without religion, without justice, without discipline, without order, without police."

Bienville, however, held firmly to his purpose and, in 1723, procured the royal permission to transfer the seat of government from Mobile to the new settlement on the banks of the Great River. Thus, at last, was La Salle's prophetic dream realized. France had become awake to the importance of concentrating her strength where it could be effective, rather than frittering it away on the shores of the Gulf.

One of the most striking evidences of the warm interest which the King felt in the colony was his sending out, in 1728, a number of decent girls, each with a trunk filled with linen and clothing (from which they were called *filles à la cassette*, or girls with a chest), who were to be disposed of under the direction of the Ursuline nuns, in marriage to the colonists. Other consignments followed; and the homes thus established soon gave to the population of the city a more quiet and orderly character.

Through various experiences, chiefly disastrous wars with the Natchez, that remarkable people

Le Moyne de Bienville

whom La Salle visited on his great exploration, and whom the French finally broke up and scattered, and with the Chickasaws in Mississippi, that hardy breed of warriors who had fought Soto so fiercely, and who now sent the Frenchmen back discomfited, Bienville in his later years lost much of his earlier prestige. But the fact remains that it was he who grasped the meaning of La Salle's plan, he who founded New Orleans, and he who guided the struggling colony through its perilous infancy. He well earned his title of "Father of Louisiana."

# Chapter XV

## FATHER LOUIS HENNEPIN

# Chapter XV

## FATHER LOUIS HENNEPIN

His Birth and Early Experiences. — His Description of Niagara Falls. — His Great Fraud. — His Real Achievement. — Captured by the Sioux. — Given to a Master. — Superstitious Fears of the Indians. — Goes with a Hunting Party. — Sees and names the Falls of St. Anthony. — Various Adventures. — Rescued and Freed.

WE come now to tell the story of a man who was neither great nor good, but was a most picturesque and entertaining scamp, and who withal deserves some small place among the Pathfinders.

Imagine a burly friar, in robe of rough gray frieze, his head covered by a pointed hood, his otherwise bare feet protected by sandals, in his hand a stout cudgel, shuffling along on snow-shoes and dragging his scanty possessions on a sled, or, if it was summer, paddling his canoe from one lonely cabin to another, celebrating mass wherever he could get together a half-dozen people, telling them the gossip of the river, eating a robust meal, then pushing on to repeat the experi-

ence elsewhere, and you will have a good picture of Father Louis Hennepin, a man whose books describing his travels, real or imaginary, had, in their day, the widest popularity in Europe. Though he was an unconscionable braggart, and though he had no scruples about falsifying facts, yet, as the first person to publish an account of the Falls of Niagara, and as the discoverer and namer of the Falls of St. Anthony, he is fairly entitled to a place in a collection like this.

He was born in Belgium, about 1640, and in due time joined the Franciscan monks. When he tells us that he was so passionately fond of tales of adventure that he often skulked behind tavern-doors, though he was sickened by the tobacco smoke, eagerly hanging on the words of the old tars spinning yarns to each other, we do not wonder at finding him on his way to the land of wonders, the New World, making the voyage in company with La Salle. The wilderness, full of hardships and haunted by treacherous savages though it was, had a fascination for him, and we soon find him serving as an itinerant missionary on the frontier.

His experience in this work recommended him for appointment as missionary at that loneliest of

outposts, La Salle's Fort Frontenac. When La Salle returned successful from his efforts to interest the court in his gigantic scheme of exploration, Father Hennepin was selected to accompany him as the representative of the Church. In preparation for the great undertaking, he was sent ahead with La Motte, an officer in La Salle's service, to Fort Frontenac, whence they proceeded in a small sailing vessel to Niagara River, under orders to build a fort that was intended to be a link in the chain of posts that La Salle purposed establishing.

Niagara Falls — "a vast and prodigious Cadence of Water," he calls it — made a deep impression on the Father, and he proceeded to write in his journal this description, which, when it was printed, was the first published account of the cataract: "This wonderful Downfall is compounded of two great Cross-streams of Water, and two Falls, with an Isle sloping along the middle of it. The Waters which fall from this vast height do foam and boil after the most hideous Manner imaginable, making an outrageous Noise, more terrible than that of Thunder; for when the wind blows from off the South, their dismal roaring may be heard above fifteen Leagues off."

The Seneca Indians, who regarded the Niagara River as belonging to themselves, were jealous of the intruders and raised so strong objections to the building of a fort, that La Motte and Hennepin made a journey to their chief town, in the hope of overcoming their opposition. Here they met with a hospitable reception from the savages, who, Hennepin says, "wash'd our Feet, which afterwards they rubb'd over with the Oil of Bears." They found here two faithful Jesuit missionaries — members of an order, by the way, not especially friendly to the one to which Hennepin belonged, the Franciscans — and, at their invitation, the father preached to the Indians.

Next came a council with the elders of the tribe. These made a great impression on Hennepin, who writes, "The Senators of Venice do not appear with a graver countenance, and perhaps don't speak with more Majesty and Solidity than those ancient Iroquese."[1]

With many cunning arguments and specious reasons, the white men stated their case through their interpreter, making much of the point that the new enterprise would open an easier trade-

[1] Hennepin's language in the passages which have been quoted is given as it appears in an old English translation.

route, by which goods could be brought and sold to the natives at rates lower than those of the Dutch, with whom these people were in the habit of dealing at Fort Orange (Albany).

The wary old warriors accepted the presents offered them, listened to the speeches, and reserved their decision until the next day, when they plainly showed that they did not put much faith in the assurances of their white brethren. In the end, La Motte and Hennepin went away disappointed. La Salle, however, on his arrival, with his extraordinary skill in dealing with Indians, secured the concessions he needed and went on with his building and the subsequent exploration.

It would be superfluous to repeat the story of the expedition, down to the building of Fort Crèvecœur. It is not until this point that the journal of Father Hennepin becomes an independent narrative.

From Fort Crèvecœur La Salle dispatched the father, with two excellent men, Accau and Du Gay, to follow the Illinois River to its mouth and, on reaching the Mississippi, to turn northward and explore its upper waters. Accau, who was an experienced *voyageur* (French for trav-

eler; a term applied to Canadians who traversed the forests and lakes, bartering with the Indians), was the real head of the expedition. But Hennepin, according to his wont, even when he was in company with so great a genius as La Salle, in his account always gives himself the foremost place.

If Father Hennepin had published no other writings than his account of the journey on the Upper Mississippi, his reputation would be that of a traveler who left a most interesting record of his experiences, embellished with fanciful additions — a not uncommon practice, in those days — but in the main reliable. Unfortunately for his good name, he did something more which justly put such a blot upon his character that many persons refused to believe his story in any of its particulars. We must give a passing notice to this daring performance.

Fourteen years after this expedition, when La Salle was dead, and with the evident purpose of robbing him of his just fame as the first white man who explored the Mississippi all the way to the Gulf, Hennepin for the first time put forth the astonishing statement that he and his two companions, on reaching the Great River, turned

south and followed its course all the way to the ocean, after which they ascended it and explored its upper waters — a truly marvelous achievement, if it were true, for three lonely men voyaging on an unknown stream among fierce savages.

Even at the time of its publication, there were those who disallowed this amazing claim. "Why has he so long kept silence about this heroic feat?" they naturally asked. Hennepin had a ready answer: he was afraid of the wrath of La Salle, who would have been furious if any doubt had been cast upon his claim of being the first explorer.

How, then, do we know the story to be false? In several ways. First, and chiefly, because what Hennepin alleged that he had done was simply impossible. In his first book, which was published, let us remember, during La Salle's lifetime, Hennepin said that he left the mouth of the Illinois on March 12, and that he was captured by the Sioux, near the mouth of the Wisconsin, five hundred miles above, on April 11. This looks reasonable, and no doubt it was true. But, in the second story, published fourteen years later, he stated that in that same interval of time he had descended the Mississippi

to the Gulf, then, returning, had traced its course as far as the mouth of the Wisconsin. One month to accomplish a distance of 3,260 miles! An average of over one hundred miles a day for three men paddling a canoe, up-stream for the greater part of the distance! Surely, we may dismiss the whole story as a colossal falsehood.

But if he did not go below the mouth of the Illinois, how did Hennepin become possessed of the information which he gives in his usual interesting way about the places and peoples all the way down the river to the Gulf? His descriptions have all the appearance of truth. He "cribbed" them. We are able to put our finger on a source from which he drew without stint. It will be remembered that Father Membré accompanied La Salle on his descent of the Mississippi, in 1681. He kept a journal of their experiences. This journal was afterward published by another friar, Le Clerc, but was suppressed by the French government, because it gave offence to the Jesuits. A few copies, however, are in existence to this day. Those who have examined one of these say that Membré's journal is the original of Hennepin's stolen narrative, sometimes whole pages agreeing word for word. Hennepin seems

to have taken it bodily, with a few necessary alterations, such as would make himself, not La Salle, the hero of the expedition. This pirated account, written in Hennepin's picturesque style, met with great success in Europe and was translated into several languages. We are reminded of the sensation which was made by Amerigo Vespucci's fanciful tales of the New World. (See "Pioneer Spaniards in North America," p. 44.)

One more question. If Hennepin lied in saying that he descended the Great River, how do we know that he really ascended it? Because this part of his story is confirmed by an independent witness. The famous trader and leader of fur-traders, Du Lhut, testified that he found Hennepin and his two companions prisoners among the Sioux and rescued them, precisely as we shall find Hennepin relating in his story of the expedition.

We shall, therefore, reject the later-published account of the imaginary journey down the Mississippi and confine our attention to the probably authentic story of his adventures on the upper waters.

Hennepin and his two associates followed the Illinois to its mouth and then turned their canoe

toward the head-waters of the Great River. For a time all went well. Game was abundant, and the travelers fared sumptuously on buffalo, deer, turkeys, and fish. Suddenly they encountered a war-party of Sioux in a number of canoes. These fierce rovers, members of the great Dakota family, whose range extended westward a thousand miles from the Mississippi, enjoyed a reputation which caused them to be called "the Iroquois of the West." Immediately they surrounded the Frenchmen with a hideous clamor. Hennepin held up the calumet; but one of them snatched it from him. Then he offered some fine Martinique tobacco, which somewhat mollified them. He also gave them two turkeys which were in the canoe. But, for all this, it was evident that the Sioux were about to treat their prisoners with their wonted ferocity. In fact, one of the warriors signified to the friar in dumb show that he was to be brained with a war-club. On the spot he hastened to the canoe and returned loaded with presents which he threw down before them. This had the effect of so far softening the savage breasts that the prisoners were given food and were allowed to rest in quiet that night.

In quiet, indeed, but not sleeping, we may be

sure, for can a more trying situation be imagined than that of knowing that one's life or death is under debate, while one has not a chance to say a single word of defence or argument? Some of the Indians, they gathered, favored killing them on the spot and taking their goods. Others contended that when they all wished to attract French traders to come into their country and bring guns, blankets, and other such commodities, it would be unwise to discourage them by killing these prisoners.

Imagine the Frenchmen's joy, when, in the early morning, a young warrior in full paint came to them, asked for the pipe which had previously been rejected, filled and smoked it, and then passed it to his companions to do the same. This pipe was the famous calumet, which we have seen to be so efficacious in the case of Joliet and Marquette. Smoking it was an intimation to the Frenchmen that there was to be peace. They were also informed that they would be taken by the Sioux to their village.

Shortly afterward the friar had a comical experience. When he took out his breviary and began to read his morning devotions in a low tone, the savages gathered around him with looks

of terror and frantically signed to him to put away the book. They mistook it for some kind of a fetish, that is, an object inhabited by a powerful spirit, and his muttering they supposed to be a magic incantation. Then a happy thought struck him. He began to sing the service in a loud and cheerful voice. This delighted the savages, who fancied that the book was teaching him to sing for their entertainment.

Now the journey up the river began. On the whole, the Frenchmen fared tolerably well. They took care always to sleep near the young warrior who had been the first to smoke the peace-pipe, and whom they regarded as their protector. The hostile party among the Indians was headed by a wily old fellow who frequently threw the prisoners into a panic by frenzied appeals to the warriors to let him avenge on the white men the death of his son, who had been killed by the Miamis. The Frenchmen invariably met this excitement by fresh gifts. Thus, while they were not openly robbed, they were gradually relieved of their earthly possessions by a sort of primitive blackmail.

Day after day the paddles plied by sinewy arms drove the canoes up the stream. A lake

was passed, which later was called Lake Pepin, in honor of one of a party of their countrymen whom they met a short time afterward.[1] On the nineteenth day after their capture, the prisoners landed, along with their masters, on the spot where St. Paul now stands.

The three Frenchmen's troubles now began in real earnest. First they must see their canoe broken to pieces, to prevent their escape, then the remainder of their goods divided. After this their captors started out for their abodes, which lay to the north, near the lake now called Mille

[1] Jonathan Carver, who journeyed up the river in 1766, was the earliest traveler who made mention of ancient monuments in this region. He says that a few miles below Lake Pepin his attention was attracted by an elevation which had the appearance of an intrenchment. He had served in the recent war between Great Britain and France and had an eye to such matters. He says, "Notwithstanding it was now covered with grass, I could plainly discern that it had once been a breast-work of about four feet in height, extending the best part of a mile and sufficiently capacious to cover five thousand men." It was semi-circular in form, and its wings rested on the river, which covered the rear. His surmise that it was built for the purpose of defence is undoubtedly correct. He wonders how such a work could exist in a country inhabited by "untutored Indians" who had no military knowledge beyond drawing a bow. Since his time we have gained far more knowledge of the aborigines, and it is ascertained beyond reasonable question that, at one period, they reared extensive earth-works, probably for the permanent protection of their villages.

Lacs. It was a hard experience for the Frenchmen to tramp with these athletic savages, wading ponds and marshes glazed with ice and swimming ice-cold streams. "Our Legs," says Hennepin, "were all over Blood, being cut by the Ice." Seeing the friar inclined to lag, the Indians took a novel method of quickening his pace. They set fire to the grass behind him and then, taking him by the hands, they ran forward with him. He was nearly spent when, after five days of exhausting travel, they reached the homes of the Sioux.

Entering the village, Hennepin saw a sight that curdled his blood. Stakes, with bundles of straws attached to them seemed in readiness for burning himself and his comrades.

Imagine their amazement when, instead of being roasted, they were taken into a lodge and treated to a kind of whortle-berry pudding *à la sauvage!*

The next matter of interest was a noisy wrangle among the warriors as to the distribution of the prisoners. To his great terror, Hennepin was assigned to Aquipagetin, the wily old villain who had insisted on the death of the Frenchmen and had persistently blackmailed them. "Surely now

my time has come," the friar said to himself. Instead, to his great surprise, he was immediately adopted by his new master as a son, to replace the one whom the Miamis had lately killed, a procedure quite in accordance with Indian custom. Hennepin thus found himself separated from his two countrymen, who had other masters, much to the relief of Accau, who heartily hated him.

The friar was now conducted by his adopted father to his lodge, which stood on an island in a lake, was introduced as his son to some six or seven of his wives, was given a platter of fish and a buffalo-robe, and altogether was treated quite as a member of the family.

Now he had a period of rest in the Sioux village. The Indians subjected him, greatly to his advantage, to a treatment such as seems to have been in very general use on this continent and to have been the most rational feature of Indian medical practice, which relied mainly on charms and incantations. It was administered by placing the patient in a tightly closed lodge and pouring water on heated stones, thus producing a dense vapor which induced copious sweating, after which he was vigorously rubbed.

The Sioux had a certain respect for him, on

account of magic powers which he was supposed to possess, and his pocket-compass inspired them with unbounded awe. On his side, he made himself useful in various ways, such as shaving the children's heads and bleeding the sick. The children had good reason to be thankful for having the friar for their barber, since the native method, he says, was "by burning off the Hair with flat Stones, which they heat red-hot in the Fire."

"Many a melancholy Day," says Hennepin, "did I pass among these Savages." His coarse, filthy food was often of the scantiest, and his work, which he was compelled to do with squaws and slaves — for, of course, no warrior would stoop to labor — was of the hardest. Besides his useful services, one thing that helped greatly to keep him alive was the superstition of his masters. One of his belongings inspired them with wholesome dread. "I had," he says, "an Iron Pot about three foot round, which had the Figure of a Lion on it, which during our Voyage served us to bake our Victuals in. This Pot the Barbarians durst never so much as touch, without covering their Hands first in something of Castor-Skin. And so great a Terror was it to the women,

that they durst not come or sleep in the Cabin where it was. They thought that there was a Spirit hid within, that would certainly kill them."

At length the time came for the Indians to go on their annual hunt, and they took Hennepin along. His countrymen were also of the party, and thus he was again thrown with them. The friar gives this indignant account of their outfit: "Our whole Equipage consisted of fifteen or twenty Charges of Powder, a Fusil [gun], a little sorry Earthen Pot, which the Barbarians gave us, a knife between us both, and a Garment of Castor [beaver]. Thus we were equipped for a voyage of 250 Leagues."

The whole band, some two hundred and fifteen in number, descended Rum River, the outlet of Mille Lacs, and encamped opposite its mouth, on the bank of the Mississippi. Food was scarce. The whole camp was on short rations, and the three Frenchmen could get little to eat but unripe berries.

This condition of things was scarcely endurable, and Hennepin was happy in securing permission from the head chief, who always acted in a very friendly manner, to go with his countrymen to

the mouth of the Wisconsin, where he said that he had an appointment to meet some French traders who were coming thither with goods — a piece of pure invention which, however, served its purpose very well. Accau refused to go, preferring the savage life to traveling with the friar. But Du Gay gladly joined him, and the two set off in a small canoe that had been given them. They went swiftly down the river, and soon came to a famous cataract, between the sites of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which Hennepin called the Falls of St. Anthony, in honor of the saint whom he particularly reverenced, St. Anthony of Padua. The name remains to this day and keeps alive the memory of the eccentric friar.[1]

[1] Jonathan Carver, who visited the Falls about a hundred years after Hennepin, and from whose works the accompanying illustration is taken, writes thus: "At a little distance below the falls stands a small island, of about an acre and a half, on which grow a great number of oak-trees, every branch of which, able to support the weight, was full of eagles' nests." These birds, he says, resort to this place in so great numbers because of its security, "their retreat being guarded by the Rapids, which the Indians never attempt to pass," and because of the abundant supply of food furnished by fish and animals "dashed to pieces by the falls and driven on the adjacent shore."

About thirty miles below the Falls, he says, he visited a remarkable cave, called by the Indians Wakon-teebe, that is, the

We shall not follow the travelers through their wanderings and adventures. Once, when they had been on very scant fare for several days, they were almost trampled by a herd of buffalo rushing down the bank to cross the river. Du Gay shot a young cow, and they feasted so bountifully that they were taken ill and could not travel for two days. In the meantime the weather was warm, their meat spoiled, and they were soon again nearly famished, depending on catfish and an occasional turtle. Hennepin thus describes one of their encounters: "I shewed Picard [Du Gay] a huge Serpent, as big as a Man's Leg, and seven or eight Foot long. She was working herself insensibly up a steep craggy Rock, to get at the Swallows Nests which are there in great Numbers. We pelted her so long with Stones, till at length she fell into the River. Her Tongue, which was in form of a Lance, was of an extraordinary Length, and her Hiss might be heard a great way."

At last the two Frenchmen joined a band of hunters and among them found our friend Accau.

Dwelling of the Great Spirit. Within it he found "many Indian hieroglyphicks which appeared very ancient." Near it was a burying-place of the Sioux.

The hunt was very successful. But Hennepin's attention was drawn in another direction by a strange story of five "Spirits," that is to say, Europeans, who were in the neighborhood. A few days later he met them at a little distance below the Falls of St. Anthony.

The leader of the party was one of the most notable men among the early pioneers. His name was Daniel Greysolon Du Lhut, or Du Luth. He was leagued with Count Frontenac and some others in the fur-trade and was equally noted for his success in that line of business, for his coolness and skill in managing Indians and rough *coureurs de bois*, and for his achievements as an explorer. He had come to the head of Lake Superior, where a city perpetuates his name, and thence had crossed to one of the tributaries of the Mississippi, when he heard of the three Frenchmen and came to meet them. The encounter was a joyful one on both sides, especially for the prisoners, whose release Du Lhut secured by gifts to the Sioux.

The eight Frenchmen now accompanied the Sioux back to Mille Lacs and were treated with great honor. Then they started east and, in due time, reached the Jesuit missions at Green

Falls of St. Anthony

Bay. And here we take leave of Father Hennepin.[1]

[1] Hennepin relates that at the Falls of St. Anthony two of the men, to the great indignation of Du Lhut when he learned of it, stole two buffalo-robes which were hung on trees as offerings to the Great Spirit. Striking natural objects seem to have been regarded by the Indians as special manifestations of divinity. It is an interesting confirmation, that Jonathan Carver relates that, at the same place, a young warrior who accompanied him threw into the stream his pipe, his tobacco, his bracelets, his neck ornaments, in short, everything of value about him, all the while smiting his breast and crying aloud to the Great Spirit for his blessing.

# Chapter XVI

## THE VÉRENDRYES DISCOVER THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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Vérendrye's Experience as a Fur-trader. — As a Soldier. — He returns to the Forests. — His Plan for reaching the Pacific. — Tremendous Difficulties in his Way. — He reaches the Mandans. — His Sons discover the Rocky Mountains. — Alexander Mackenzie follows the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Ocean. — He achieves a Passage over the Mountains to the Pacific. — Note on Mandan Indians. — Mah-to-toh-pa's Vengeance. — Singular Dwellings of the Mandans. — Their Bloody Ordeal. — Skin-boats. — Catlin's Fanciful Theory.

WE have seen how the dream of a short route to China and the Indies inspired a long line of adventurous explorers. At the first it was hoped that the Mississippi afforded such a passage. When it was known beyond all doubt that the Great River flows into the Gulf, not the "Western Sea," longing eyes were turned toward the western part of the continent, in the hope that some stream would be found flowing into the Pacific which would carry the keels of commerce Indiaward. The huge barrier of the Rocky Mountains was

not known, and it was only in the effort to reach the Pacific by water that they were discovered.

So important was the desired route considered that, in 1720, the French King sent out the noted historian of New France, Father Charlevoix, to explore westward and discover a way to the Pacific. He recommended two plans, either to follow the Missouri River to its head-waters or to push a chain of trading-posts gradually westward until the continent should be crossed. The former plan was the one actually carried out, eighty-three years later, by the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, which crossed the Rockies and followed the Columbia River to the ocean. The second plan was the easier and less expensive, and it was the earlier to be tried. Still several years elapsed before the effort was made.

The hardy adventurer was Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Vérendrye, son of the Governor of Three Rivers. Early experience as a fur-trader taught him to know the Indians and the hard life of the northern forests. Then came the war of the Spanish Succession, and, a loyal French subject, he left his fur-trade, hastened to Europe, asked to serve the King, and was given a commission as a lieutenant. The famous field of

Malplaquet came near to witnessing the end of his career. He lay on it for dead, gashed with the sabre and pierced with bullets. Still he recovered, returned to New France, and plunged again into the woods as a trader.

Being placed in command of the French outpost on Lake Nipigon, where he also carried on a brisk trade, he heard many a tale from Indians who came with furs. One of these stories fired his imagination. It was of a great river flowing westward out of a lake into water in which there was a tide. Then the Indian drew a rough map on birch bark, a copy of which is still in existence. Could this be the long-desired route to the Pacific? He hoped it and was resolved to ascertain the truth. But first he must get leave and an outfit. Having made the long and dangerous journey in his birch-bark canoe, that is, gone from Lake Nipigon into Lake Superior, traversed the entire length of the lakes, and then descended the St. Lawrence to Quebec, he laid before the French governor, Beauharnais, his plan for reaching the Pacific by the net-work of lakes and rivers north and west of Lake Superior. The Governor approved, but Vérendrye, applying to the King for men and means, got nothing but a grant

of the monopoly of the fur-trade north and west of Lake Superior. He must raise the money himself. With difficulty and at exorbitant rates of interest, he obtained advances from Quebec merchants and set out, June 8, 1731, with his three sons and a nephew, LaJemeraye. At the close of the season he built his first fort, St. Pierre, on Rainy River. The next year he established his second fort, St. Charles, on the southwest shore of the Lake of the Woods.

Terribly embarrassed by lack of money, he returned to Quebec and represented his deplorable situation. The Governor reported it to the King, but could get no more from him than the renewal of the fur-trade monopoly. Undaunted, Vérendrye persisted, though obliged to suspend exploration and devote himself for a while to trading, in order to secure money. There was enough to dishearten a man of less than heroic stuff. In 1736, his eldest son, with a Jesuit priest and twenty others, was surprised and massacred by the Sioux on an island in the Lake of the Woods. Also he was harassed by creditors and compelled repeatedly to make the long and tedious journey to Montreal. In spite of all these mishaps, he pushed his posts gradually westward and by 1738

he had established six, viz., St. Pierre, on Rainy Lake; St. Charles, on the Lake of the Woods; Maurepas at the mouth of the Winnipeg River; Bourbon on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg; La Reine on Assiniboine River; and Dauphin on Lake Manitoba.

In 1738 he made a bold push for the Pacific, with fifty persons, French and Indians. After many devious wanderings, seeking a band that could conduct him to the Western Ocean, he reached the Mandans, on the upper Missouri, the singularly interesting people among whom Lewis and Clark spent the winter sixty-six years later. But, having been robbed of the presents which he had provided, he was unable to get a guide to lead him further and was obliged to return. The journey was made in midwinter and was full of frightful hardships.

His eldest surviving son, Pierre de la Vérendrye, full of his father's spirit, devoted himself to the same quest. He had with him his brother and two other men. They started from Fort La Reine, reached the Mandans, and pushed on to the West. All through the summer, autumn, and early winter they toiled on, going hither and yon, beguiled by the usual fairy-tales of tribesmen.

At last, on New Year's day, 1743, two hundred and fifty years after the Discovery, doubtless first of all white men, they saw the Rocky Mountains from the east. This probably was the Big Horn Range, one hundred and twenty miles east of the Yellowstone Park. Finding this tremendous obstacle across their path to the Pacific, they turned back. On July 12 they reached La Prairie, to the great joy of their father, who had given them up for lost.

A later Governor of Canada not only ignored the heroic services of the Vérendryes, but seized their goods, turned over their posts to another, and reduced them to poverty.

It was a long time before their work was taken up, and it remained for a man of another race to accomplish what they had so bravely striven for. Alexander Mackenzie, a Scotch Highlander by birth, was an energetic young agent of the Montreal Company in the Athabasca region. He determined to undertake certain explorations. In June, 1789, he set out from Fort Chippewyan, on the south shore of Lake Athabasca, with four birch canoes and a party of white men and several Indians, including a guide and interpreter. Going down Snake River, the explorers reached Great

Slave Lake, then entered a heretofore unknown river, the one which now bears the name of its discoverer, and followed it until, on July 12, they sighted the Arctic Ocean, filled with ice-floes, with spouting whales between.

In October, 1792, he set out, determined this time to reach the Pacific Ocean. He left Fort Chippewyan, skirted the lake to Slave River, then ascended its southwest tributary, Peace River. He wintered on this stream in a trading-house which he had sent an advance party to build, employed in hunting and trading. In May, having sent back a large cargo of furs to Fort Chippewyan, he started up the river with a party of seven white men and two Indians. The voyagers traveled in a birch canoe twenty-five feet long, "but so light that two men could carry her on a good road three or four miles without resting." "In this slender vessel," he says, "we shipped provisions, goods for presents, arms, ammunition, and baggage, to the weight of thirty thousand pounds, and an equipage of ten people."

The difficulties and dangers were tremendous. Paddling and pushing and poling up the rocky bed of a swift stream abounding in rapids, they made slow progress. More than once the canoe

was broken. Portages were often necessary. Again and again the crew, exhausted and their clothing in tatters, sullenly insisted that there was no choice but to turn back. But Mackenzie was a man of indomitable courage and all the persistency of the Scotch race. He had already shown this quality by taking the long journey and voyage from the wilds of Athabasca to London, in order to study the use of astronomical instruments, so that he might be qualified to make scientific observations. Now he would not hear of turning back.

So the discouraged party, animated by Mackenzie, pushed on, climbed over the dividing mountains, and came upon the head-waters of a stream flowing westward, the one now called Fraser River. After following it for several days, they struck off through dense forests, sometimes on dizzy trails over snow-clad mountains, until they reached a rapid river. On this they embarked in two canoes with several natives, and thus reached the ocean — *the Pacific!*

Vérendrye's dream was realized at last. The continent had been spanned from East to West.

Twelve years later the same thing was done within the territory of the United States by Lewis

and Clark, at the head of an expedition sent out by President Jefferson. They spent the winter among the Mandan Indians, the interesting people with whom the Vérendryes had come in contact. A note is added in which some information is given about them.

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## NOTE ON THE MANDANS

These Indians first became known to white men through the expedition of the elder Vérendrye. They showed themselves hospitable and friendly to him, as they always have been to our race, and they aided his sons in their efforts to reach the Western Sea. Next we have quite full references to them in the journals of Lewis and Clark. These explorers were sent out by President Jefferson in 1803, immediately on the completion of the Louisiana Purchase, to get a better knowledge of the northern portion of the vast territory recently acquired, with a particular view to developing the fur-trade and to opening a route to the Pacific. All these ends were accomplished with a degree of success that made the enterprise one of the greatest achievements in our history. The explorers, having ascended the Missouri in their boats, and finding themselves, as winter came on, near the Mandan villages,

decided to remain there until the spring. Accordingly they passed the winter, 1803–4, among these interesting tribesmen. It being a part of their prescribed duty to keep full journals of all that they experienced or saw, they have left extended accounts of the people and their customs.

Thirty-four years later George Catlin, a famous artist and student of Indian life, who spent many years in traveling among the wild tribes of the West and in describing them with pen, pencil, and brush, came among the Mandans. He was so much impressed with them as a singular and superior people that he remained among them a considerable time, painted many of their men and women, studied and made drawings of some of their singular ceremonies, and devoted a large part of his two volumes to a highly interesting account of what he saw among them.

Catlin certainly was wholly free from the silly prejudice expressed in the familiar saying, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." His two volumes, "The North American Indians," furnish "mighty interesting reading." As we accompany him in his long journeys by canoe and on horseback and read his descriptions of the tribes he visited and the warriors and chiefs he learned to know, and of whom he has left us pictures, it is a satisfaction to feel that we are traveling with a man who looked on the Indian as a human being. Sometimes we are inclined to suspect that, in the enthusiasm of his artistic nature, he idealized his subject and viewed him with a degree of sentiment as remote from the truth in one direction as

was the hostile prejudice of the average white man in the other. We know that he either did not see or purposely ignored certain aspects of Indian life, notably the physical dirt and the moral degradation.

When he comes to the Mandans, this disposition to make heroes of his subjects fairly runs away with him. No language is strong enough to do justice to his admiration of some of them. We easily let pass such phrases as the "wild and gentlemanly Mandans," for many observers have reported that there is a native dignity and courtesy about the true Indian. But there are other things which make it plain that Catlin, in his extravagant admiration, where his Indian friends were concerned was incapable of discriminating between the noble and the base. Here is an instance :

A certain chief of the Mandans, Mah-to-toh-pa (the Four Bears), was very friendly to Catlin, who painted his portrait, and who speaks of him in terms of unbounded admiration. He gave his artist friend a handsomely embroidered deerskin shirt on which he had depicted in Indian fashion his various achievements. One, of which he was especially proud, he recounted at length to Catlin, acting it out before him, and he in turn relates it to his readers.

Mah-to-toh-pa had a brother slain — in open fight, let us remember — by a Rickaree, who left his lance sticking in the dead man. Mah-to-toh-pa found the body, drew out the lance, and carried it to his village, where it was recognized as the property of a famous warrior named Won-ga-tap. He kept the bloodstained weapon,

vowing that some day he would with it avenge his brother's death. Four years passed by, and still he nursed his wrath. Then one day he worked himself up to a frenzy and went through the village crying that the day of vengeance had come.

Off he started across the prairie alone, with a little parched corn in his pouch, went two hundred miles, traveling by night and hiding by day, until he reached the Rickaree village. Knowing it and the location of Won-ga-tap's lodge — which suggests that he had visited the place in some friendly relation — he entered at dusk and loitered about for a time, and then through rents in the covering watched Won-ga-tap smoke his last pipe and go to bed by the side of his wife. Then Mah-to-toh-pah went in, coolly seated himself by the smouldering fire, and, using the privilege of Indian hospitality, helped himself to meat that was in a kettle over the embers, and ate a hearty meal.

"Who is that man who is eating in our lodge?" asked the wife several times.

"Oh, let him alone. No doubt he is hungry," the easy-going Won-ga-tap answered.

His meal finished, the intruder helped himself to his host's pipe, filled and lighted it, and began to smoke. When he had finished, he gently pushed the coals together with his toes, so that he got a better light and was able to discern the outline of his intended victim's body. Then he rose softly, plunged his lance into Won-ga-tap's heart, snatched off his scalp, and ran away with it and with the dripping lance.

In a moment the Rickaree camp was in an uproar. But before pursuers were started the assassin was far out on the plains. The darkness protected him, he successfully eluded pursuit, returned safely to his home, and entered the village, triumphantly exhibiting Won-ga-tap's scalp and the fresh blood dried on his lance.

This story, which Catlin says is attested by white men who were in the Mandan village at the time, may stand as a notable instance of savage vengefulness and daring, cunning and treachery; but it will scarcely serve to make us believe in Catlin's "noble Mandan gentlemen," of whom he puts forward Mah-to-toh-pa as a conspicuous example.

When we read Lewis and Clark's account of the Mandans, we are in quite another atmosphere, not that of romance but of simple reality. They spent several months among them, on the friendliest terms, and they speak kindly of them, but do not disguise the brutality of savage life. Between these two authorities we have ample information, from opposite points of view.

The first thing that would impress a visitor with the fact that he had come among a peculiar people, is the character of their dwellings, absolutely unlike any used by any other tribe, either of the woods or plains, except their near neighbors and friends, the Minitarees. The lodge is a circular structure, set in an excavation about two feet deep. A framework of stout posts supports a roof of poles converging toward the centre, where an opening is left for the entrance of light and the escape of smoke. On these poles brush is spread, and over this

earth is laid to the depth of about two feet. In this earth grass grows abundantly, and thus a Mandan village presents the appearance of an assemblage of green mounds.

Lewis and Clark were much impressed with the fearlessness of the Mandan women in crossing the Missouri, even when it was quite rough, in a tub-like boat consisting of a single buffalo-hide stretched under a frame-work of wicker.[1] Catlin saw the same boat in use, and it afforded him confirmation for a peculiar theory which he advanced.

He was much surprised at the light complexion of the Mandans generally and at the fact that he actually saw some blue eyes and gray eyes among them and some whitish hair. These circumstances seemed to him to point clearly to an admixture of European blood. He wrote at a time when fanciful theories about the native Americans were much in vogue. He had read somewhere that a Welsh prince, Madoc, more than two hundred years before the time of Columbus, sailed away from his country with ten ships. By some unexplained process, he traced him to America. Then he supposed him to ascend the Mississippi as far as the mouth of the Ohio and there to found a colony. This, being entirely cut off from communication with the mother country, was compelled to ally itself with the nearest Indians and took wives among them. From these unions sprang a mixed race, the Mandans, who eventually formed a

[1] We may remember that La Salle and his followers found Indians on the plains of Texas crossing rivers in boats made of buffalo-hide.

separate tribe and were gradually driven up the Missouri to the point where he found them.

There is not any doubt of the large admixture of European blood among the Mandans, and it is easily accounted for. Catlin does not seem to have known of any white visitors before Lewis and Clark. But we have seen that the Vérendryes reached these people a full hundred years before Catlin's day. There is every reason for believing that, from that time, white hunters and traders never ceased to visit them. These Indians being, from the first, very hospitable and friendly, their villages were favorite resorts for fur-traders, who took up their abode among them for several years at a time and married there. One can easily see that, in the course of a hundred years, there would be several generations of mixed blood, and that, through inter-marriages, there would probably be few families whose color would not be lighter in consequence. The persons whose peculiar whitish hair Catlin noticed, undoubtedly were *albinos*, a class of persons in whom the natural coloring of the hair is wanting and the eyes are red or pink.

The Mandans probably are nothing more than an interesting tribe of Indians who, through long intermingling with the white race, have undergone considerable lightening of their original color.

A year after Catlin's visit his Mandan friends experienced a frightful calamity. A trading steamboat brought the small-pox to them, and, as happened in the case of many other tribes in the West, its ravages were fearful. Not being protected by vaccination, and knowing nothing

of the treatment of the disease, the poor creatures died horribly. Not a few, in the height of their fever, threw themselves into the Missouri and so found a quicker and easier death. Nearly the whole tribe perished.

The remnant, along with that of their long-time friends and neighbors, the Minitarees, may be found to-day at Fort Berthold, in North Dakota.

## BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

The Origin of the American aborigines is treated briefly by Dr. John Fiske in "The Discovery of America," Chapter I, and at great length and with wide research by Mr. E. J. Payne in his "History of the New World Called America."

Their Distribution, also sketched by Dr. Fiske, is satisfactorily detailed by Dr. D. G. Brinton in his "Races and Peoples."

Those who may wish to study Indian Social Life in its primitive conditions will do well to read the work of Baron de Lahontan, recently edited by Dr. R. G. Thwaites. He was among the earliest writers on aboriginal affairs, and his "New Voyages to North America" gives the results of travel and observation about the years 1683–1701. "Three Years' Travels through North America," by Jonathan Carver, relates an interesting experience among the Indians between the years 1766 and 1768. Some of his general remarks, however, are drawn from the preceding writer. An inexhaustible store of information on this subject is found in the famous "Jesuit Relations," which have been edited, in an English translation, by Dr. Thwaites. For ordinary readers, however, the very interesting treatment by Dr. Fiske, in the chapter already cited, and especially by

Mr. Francis Parkman, in the Introduction to his "The Jesuits in North America," will amply suffice.

In the same chapters will be found a satisfactory account of the Iroquois League. Students, however, who may wish to go to the fountain-head are referred to Mr. Lewis Morgan, whose work, "The League of the Iroquois," is the accepted authority.

As to Cartier, Ribaut, Laudonnière, Champlain, and La Salle, the writer has not gained any new light by referring to the original documents, and has drawn his material chiefly from that great master, Parkman, by whom the first four are treated in his "Pioneers of France in the New World," and the last-named in his "La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West."

The story of the Jesuit missionaries runs through what is practically a whole library, the "Jesuit Relations." Parkman, in a volume devoted to setting forth the nobler aspects of their work, "The Jesuits in North America," does ample justice to the heroism of the best of these pioneers.

For Radisson the only authority is himself. His "Voyage," not published until after it had lain in manuscript two hundred and twenty-five years, and of which but two hundred and fifty copies are in existence, is one of the quaintest of books and "mighty interesting reading."

The story of Joliet and Marquette's exploration is told most interestingly by Dr. Thwaites, in his "Father Marquette," and by Parkman, in his "La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West." The observations of

Jonathan Carver, who went over a part of their route about one hundred years later, throw much interesting light on some of their experiences.

Father Hennepin receives ample justice from Parkman in his account of the opening of the Great West. Readers, however, who may desire a first-hand acquaintance with the erratic friar will find curious, much of it stolen, reading in his "New Discovery in North America," his "Description of Louisiana," and his "Curious Voyage."

In Dr. Thwaites's "Rocky Mountain Exploration" may be read the story of the heroic Vérendryes and dauntless Alexander Mackenzie.

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